AFZAL IQBAL

Life and Times of MOHAMED ALI

AN ANALYSIS OF THE HOPES, FEARS AND ASPIRATIONS OF MUSLIM INDIA FROM 1778 TO 1931

INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

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by

DR AFZAL IQBAL

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TO

ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO

WHO

ARTICULATES SO SINCERELY THE SENTIMENT
AND STRUGGLE OF PAKISTAN

مَنْ يَّشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً حَسَنَةً يَّكُنْ لَّهٗ نَصِيْبٌ مِّنْهَا
وَمَنْ يَّشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَّكُنْ لَّهٗ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا

'Whoso interveneth in a good cause will have the reward thereof, and whoso interveneth in an evil cause will bear the consequence thereof' (The Quran, iv. 85).

لا غالب الا الله

Mohamed Ali's motto

NONE BUT GOD SHALL PREVAIL

PREFACE

I NEVER saw Mohamed Ali. I was struggling with my 3 R's in a primary school in Lahore when he died in London. The first time I became aware of him was in college. He was a legend. I wanted to know something about him but the little I read left me cold. I was Chief Editor of *The Ravi*, the Government College magazine, as well as President of the College Union. I was keenly interested in his writings and speeches. In this search I went to Jamia Millia at Delhi, the University founded by Mohamed Ali. Dr Zakir Husain who was then Rector encouraged me. The first and only book he wrote, *My Life : A Fragment*, was published as a result of my boyish interest. It was followed by a Selection of his Writings and Speeches. This was in the early forties.

I have since noticed that every year, on his birth anniversary, the national press in Pakistan comes out with articles on his life and work. The annual ritual of hackneyed tributes, while sustaining public interest in him, has not produced any work of scholarship. Perhaps this is not easy. The material is scant. Those who have some are reluctant to part with it. With all my associations with Jamia Millia I have not been allowed access to his private papers. I have been assured they are irrelevant to my study. No attempt has been made to catalogue and publish them. As to the scholars in Aligarh, I found them hesitant and afraid to co-operate. I got little from Rampur and Baroda. His own relations were the least interested. For thirty years I searched without success.

It was in London and Cambridge in 1966 that I reaped a rich harvest. There I found a wealth of material in the official papers

thrown open for the first time to the public. Now I had ample material but lacked the time and will to give it shape. It was during the Indo-Pakistan War in December 1971 that I felt a sudden urge to write. I was feeling deeply depressed. Instead of brooding in the dark winter nights I began to write. The war ended but the work went on. In five weeks the first draft was finished. It was mostly written between midnight and morning prayers. As I wrote I found the story both revealing and relevant to the hopes and fears of Muslims in South Asia today. The act of writing sustained me through a personal and national crisis. It was a rewarding effort.

So far as is known this is the first full-length biography of Mohamed Ali in English. It is mostly based on newly opened Government records and private papers. The book attempts to explore almost virgin territory. The story has been allowed to unfold itself, where possible, in the words of contemporary sources. Quotations from Mohamed Ali may at times appear lengthy but they have been allowed space in the belief that unpublished documentation may be of some value to those who may wish to pursue the study. The gaps are many and conspicuous. Mohamed Ali's private papers are scattered about in India and Pakistan. Until they become available the story will remain incomplete.

In writing the biography I have adopted the chronological approach which helps create a perspective. In following the development of his personality over the years I have tried to be as objective as possible. The temptation to pass judgment has been resisted until the end. The concluding chapter is both an assessment and an appreciattion, for the story, whether marked by success or failure, is as much part of our history as it is of Mohamed Ali's life. It has been my effort to present it in its entirety. The discerning reader will judge the result for himself.

In the pages that follow Maulana Mohamed Ali Jauhar is simply referred to as Mohamed Ali, and his name is spelt in the same way as he chose for himself.

AFZAL IQBAL

Rio de Janeiro
12 July 1972

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I AM indeed grateful to God Almighty that He provided me with the resources which made it possible for me independently to carry out my studies in different lands. I am glad that I am not beholdened to any government or foundation for assistance of any kind. The views expressed in this book for whatever they are worth are entirely mine.

The place of precedence in acknowledgments must go to the octogenarian scholar who is by far the greatest living authority on Mohamed Ali. The constant encouragement and support that I received over a period of thirty years from Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi contributed in no small measure to my determination to pursue this study. His enthusiastic approval of the present work is, therefore, most valuable to me.

Many friends and colleagues helped me over the years in many ways. I would wish, however, to express my thanks to the following in particular:

The Librarian and staff of the India Office Library in London for their unfailing courtesy and assistance.

A.S. Bazmee Ansari, a member of the Editorial Board of *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, for going through the manuscript and making valuable suggestions.

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Mian Azim Husain, India's former Ambassador to Switzerland, for lending the personal diary of the late Sir Fazal-i-Husain.

Begum Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz for permission to use extracts from the private diary of her father, the late Sir Muhammad Shafi.

The late lamented Professor Hamid Ahmad Khan for reading a portion of the manuscript.

Professor Muhammad Sarwar, formerly of Jamia Millia, Delhi, for taking the trouble to read the manuscript within a few days and giving me the benefit of his views.

Suleman Salim, a student of Trinity College, Cambridge, in the 'sixties, for assistance in research in the Library of his University.

Ambassador S.K. Dehlavi, a scion of the Dehlavi family which had intimate connections with Mohamed Ali, for a critical scrutiny of the manuscript.

My daughter Rubina for working with me as a Research Assistant.

Muhammad Ashraf Darr for his painstaking efforts to see the book through the press.

And finally my wife for whom I will use no adjectives but merely say that much midnight oil was burnt to complete this book in time for our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. I could not have asked for a more devout fulfilment of a wish for I was able to offer her a bulky typescript as a gift on 13 July 1972. May she live long to share my joy on such happy occasions !

AFZAL IQBAL

Pakistan House
Stockholm
13 June 1974

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

In internationalised words and names the spellings ordinarily current in English have been used, e.g. Mecca, Medina, etc.

For Indian names and places the spellings familiar in the sub-continent have been adopted, e.g. Abdul Rahim, not 'Abd al-Rahim which would be correct and scientific.

For the hamzah (ء) no distinction sign has been used. The letters s and z have been used for the aspirated t and d often transcribed in Arabic by <u>th</u> and <u>dh</u>, e.g. hadis not hadi<u>th</u>.

The convention used in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* has been generally followed for the Arabic words. The following table indicates the few departures made in this work :

s	for	<u>th</u>
z	for	<u>dh</u>
t	for	t́
j	for	<u>dj</u>
ch	for	č
q	for	ḳ

ABBREVIATIONS

H.P.	:	Private Papers of Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India (1911-1916)
C.P.	:	Private Papers of Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy of India (1916-1921)
R.P.	:	Private Papers of Lord Reading, Viceroy of India (1921-1926)
H.C.	:	Private Papers of Lord Irwin (later Halifax), Viceroy of India (1926-1931)
S.P.	:	Private Papers of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru
SH.P.	:	Private Papers of Sir Muhammad Shafi
Hly.C	:	Private Papers of Lord Hailey, Governor of the Punjab
SS	:	Secretary of State for India
V	:	Viceroy of India
L.A.D.	:	Indian Legislative Assembly Debates
D.I.B. Report	:	Report on the non-co-operation movement complied by P.C. Bamford, Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, Simla; 250 pages. Copy in India Office Library
History Sheet	:	History Sheet of Mohamed Ali compiled by F.H. Vincent, Deputy Director, Criminal Intelligence, India; Indian Archives. Copy in India Office Library
Written Statement	:	Written Statement filed by Mohamed Ali to Committee of Enquiry appointed in December 1918, to enquire into the question of his release. India Office Library J & P. 3248/19
Muslim League Documents	:	*Foundations of Pakistan*, All-India Muslim League Documents (1906-1947) compiled by Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, Karachi, 1969

Writings and Speeches	: *Select Writings and Speeches of Maulana Mohamed Ali*, edited by Afzal Iqbal, Lahore, 1942. All references are to this edition except to the 'Choice of the Turks'.
Oxford History	: *The Oxford History of Modern India* (1965).

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Chapter One

THE MUSLIM MIND IN VICTORIAN INDIA

[1878–1902]

The Plight of Muslims after the Rising of 1857—The Rational Response of Syed Ahmad Khan—The Founding of M.A.O. College at Aligarh, 1877—The Birth of the Indian National Congress, 1885—Aims of Aligarh Movement—The Impact of Turkey on Indian Muslims—Syed Ahmad's Reaction to Sultan Abdul Hamid's Claim to Caliphate—Jamal-ud-Din al-Afghani's Opposition to Syed Ahmad Khan—Atmosphere of Rampur State—The Feudal Conditions of the Family—Bi Amman, Mohamed Ali's Mother—Studies in a School in Rampur—Move to a School in Bareilly—Young Mohamed Ali's Interest in Poetry—Schooling at Aligarh—Encounter with Shibli Numani—Contemporary Atmosphere at Aligarh College—First Journey to England for Higher Studies—Stay in London and Fazl-i-Husain's Recollections—Three Years at Lincoln's College, Oxford—Failure in the I.C.S. and Return to India

I

Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in 1876—two years before Mohamed Ali was born. Within a century after Plassey (1757) the whole Subcontinent had been brought under British control. While the greater part became British India, two-fifths of it, the Indian India, comprising no less than 562 princely States, had a different relationship with the British Crown. Their territories did not become British soil, nor their inhabitants British subjects. India was divided into two distinct parts, in which the basis and form of government were different but the pattern and policy were the same—a kind of paternalism, mixed with incipient imperialism and absolute authority.

While there was an atmosphere of paternalism in British India, in the Indian States the Princes ruled with benevolent despotism. The ruling chiefs were encouraged to educate their cadets along

European lines. Lord Mayo founded Chiefs' Colleges on the pattern of public schools in England. Progress in the native States was generally not equal to progress in British India. Many small States remained feudal and primitive. The Princes had to submit to much interference from the British Residents. The legal basis for this interference was the doctrine of paramountcy or the royal prerogative taken over from the Mughals. In some cases the Resident, a watch-dog of the British Government, was the practical ruler of the State.

Muslims had lived in India for nearly a thousand years until the last of the Mughals, Bahadur Shah Zafar, who was dragged into the 'Mutiny' of 1857 much against his will, as a symbol of revolt against the British, was banished to Burma in 1858. Both Hindus and Muslims had rallied round his person in their last desperate bid to resist the onslaught of the British—the Oudh Taluqdars, the Jhansi Sardars, the Nana, the Mughal Princes, the Maulvi of Fyzabad, but Muslims alone were held responsible for this revolt and suffered in consequence at the hands of the new rulers.

For the first time in their history now, Muslims began to live with Hindus as subjects of an alien power, but while existing together they lived apart. The differences between Hindus and Muslims were deep and fundamental. 'Hinduism has its primeval roots in a land of rivers and forests, Islam in the desert. Hindus worship many gods, Muslims only one : the temple, with its luxuriance of sculptured effigies, confronts the mosque, declaring by its bare simplicty that idolatry is sin. Hinduism maintains a rigid caste-system : Islam proclaims the equal brotherhood of believers. The classical language of Hindus is Sanskrit, of Muslims Arabic and Persian : the distinctive daily speech of the one is the Hindi, of the other, the Urdu variant of Hindustani. Though Hindus and Muslims lived side by side all over India, yet the natural ties of kinship are completely lacking; since both the Koran and the Hindu laws of caste prohibit inter-marriage; nor many an

orthodox Hindu shares his table with a Muslim.'[1]

History intensified this sense of difference. The Muslims remembered that they were once the ruling people. Never had India been so powerful and prosperous, so well governed, or so famous throughout the world as in the days of Muslim rule, especially that of the Mughals. While Hinduism was confined to the land of its origin, Islam stretched far beyond the bounds of India across the Middle East to the Mediterranean and along its southern shore to the Atlantic, and Muslim civilisation in India had been enriched by scholars and artists coming to the Mughal Court from other quarters of the Muslim world and by the cultural traditions of Tehran, Cairo, Baghdad and Granada.

The splendour of that age seemed all the brighter by contrast with the long period of decline and decay that followed it. Once the Muslims had been lords of the land in every sense, but with the coming of the British the abject sense of slavery became all too pronounced. The big estates were thinned away by extravagance and litigation, and the small man was increasingly enmeshed and dispossessed of his holding by the money-lender who was more often than not a Hindu. In all the new economic developments of the latter nineteenth century, morever, the more conservative and less educated Muslims were no match for the keen, purposeful, better-organised Hindus. Still more marked was the change in the political status of the Muslims. With the collapse of the Mughal Empire and the advent of the British rule they ceased to be the governing class. Even in the lower ranks of public service they soon found themselves edged out by the Hindus.

Their first set-back was the dropping of Persian as the official language in 1835—this rendered, as it were, a whole nation illiterate; the next was the 'Mutiny,' which was wrongly supposed at the time to have been mainly due to Muslim instigation; the third was the growth of higher education, the opportunities and pro-

1. Sir Abdur Rahim, quoted by Sir T. Morrison in *Political India* (London, 1932), p. 104.

fessional rewards of which were eagerly seized by the Hindus but rejected by the Muslims who clung to the old orthodox tradition of classical education and turned their back on the new secular learning of the 'Franks'.

A new education policy was introduced in 1835 when Persian gave way to English as the medium of instruction. The policy produced clerks but not a new intellectual *elite*. For real quality in Western education it was necessary to go to England. The new system lacked any moral content or personal contact. The universities were mere agencies for prescribing courses and conducting examinations.

Some progress was made towards the Indianisation of the Services. The monopoly by the Company's Civil Service of all jobs worth more than Rs 500 was relaxed. By 1853 the covenanted service was thrown open to competitive examination. But the examinations were held in England. It was not until 1863 that the first Indian, Satyendra Nath Tagore, entered the Service. By 1887 the Services had been divided into three categories—the Imperial Service, the Provincial Service and the Subordinate Services. The Imperial Service, the dream of all educated Indians, continued to be recruited by examination, nomination and promotion in India.

It was the connection between education and Government that forced the Muslims to bestir themselves. When Hindu clerks were promoted to posts in which they could give orders, when even policemen were chosen because they were good at their books, it was clearly time for Muslims to reconsider their attitude to the new education. But they were a defeated, frustrated and a leaderless community. The confusion was never more confounded than in the wake of the catastrophe of 1857 which had atrophied and paralysed the Muslims who were neither prepared nor equipped to face the consequences of a change which had stripped them of their pride, their privilege, their place in society.

The British had monopolised from the time of Cornwallis the chief offices of State for themselves, leaving the upper classes to

jostle for subordinate posts with Hindus, or else to stand aloof in pride and poverty. Soon Western education was added as another unacceptable condition for office.

The large-scale resumption of rent-free lands and the ruin of the Bengal weaving industry further depressed the community. The psychological, social and economic discontent of the Muslims at this time has been ably analysed in Sir William Hunter's study, *The Indian Mussulmans*. Writing about the Muslim noble families he says :

'They drag on a listless existence in patched up verandas or leaky outhouses sinking deeper and deeper into a hopeless abyss of debt, till the neighbouring Hindu money-lender fixes a quarrel on them, and then in a moment a host of mortgages foreclose, and the ancient Mussulman family is suddenly swallowed up and disappears for ever.'[2]

He suggests :

'If any statesman wishes to make a sensation in the House of Commons, he has only to truly narrate the history of these Muhammadan families of Bengal.'

He adds :

'There is now scarcely a Government office in Calcutta in which a Muhammadan can hope for any post above the rank of a porter, messenger, filler of inkpots and mender of pens.'[3]

It was in this condition of political eclipse and cultural depression that Indian Islam was confronted with the challenge of the West. At first bad seemed to grow worse. But the Muslims were too numerous to be absorbed or permanently reduced to insignificance. The rational response of Indian Islam to the West came, however, not from religious Muslim scholar, who tortoise-like, withdrew into his shell : nor from the Muslim Princes who toyed

2. W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Mussulmans* (Lahore, 1964), p. 147.

3. Ibid., p. 16. In 1871, out of 2141 Indian employees of the Government only 92 were Muslims (R.R. Sethi, 'Rise and Growth of Muslim Communalism in India,' *The Cambridge History of India*, VI, 616).

with European trinkets and whose interest in Western thought was limited to furniture, wines and uniforms, but from a Civil Servant, Syed Ahmad Khan, who took service under the British in 1837, and had in twenty years risen only to the rank of a Subordinate Judge.

In 1857 Syed Ahmad Khan found himself the leader of a defeated and a demoralised community. He was the first Indian Muslim to realise that the conservative challenge to the new forces of the West could not succeed in overthrowing the alien power. He called for a constructive response, a change in the methods of warfare. He set about earnestly to resolve the conflict between religion and science, he braved the fierce oposition of the Ulema who branded him an infidel, he suffered the scorn and ridicule which was poured on him by the traditionalist scholar who called him a time-server,[4] and dubbed him a stooge of the British.

Syed Ahmad decided to act as an interpreter between the conservative East and the encroaching West. In 1857 he wrote *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*. Of the 500 copies printed, 498 were sent for distribution among influential persons in England, and one was sent to the Government of India, only one being retained by the author himself. Not a single copy was circulated in India. In 1870 he founded *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, a journal named after the famous ethical treatise of Ibn Miskawayh, but modelled on Addison and Steele's *Spectator* and *Tatler*. In easily readable language he wrote on a wide range of subjects. On its pages modernism emerged as a potent force. It raised a storm of bitter controversy, but Syed Ahmad Khan fought on until 1877 when the journal was closed down—but by then it had achieved its purpose. Syed Ahmad Khan was convinced that the Indian Muslims must make terms with the West, both politically and culturally. He considered that the peace and security provided by the British regime entitled it to be included in the *Dar-ul-Islam*. He exhorted the Muslims to win British approval by active loyalty. Otherwise, he warned, they

4. See Nazir Ahmad's novel *Ibn al-Waqt* and Akbar Allahabadi's satires.

would be outdistanced by the Hindus in the race for Government favour, as had already happened in the case of education. A modern education, he was convinced, was the *sine qua non* of the community's progress. He, therefore, became the champion of Western knowledge which should not be inconsistent with the tenets of Islam. The fruit of this advocacy was the opening of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875, on the lines of the Cambridge University which Syed Ahmad Khan had visited earlier in 1869.

Aligarh aimed at a reconciliation between religion and science, it encouraged a scientific worldview and strove for a steady increase of educated Muslims in the Government services, and finally its objective was to produce a leadership for Muslim India which, within the limitations of the situation, could help rescue the mass of the Muslims from their stupor, despair and poverty, and lead them along a path which would ensure for them a secure future in British India.

Syed Ahmad Khan stood for a distinct identity of Muslims in India and believed that unless the Muslim personality was preserved, strengthened and fortified in all its aspects—religious, cultural, political and economic—the community could not make any significant contribution to the country as such. He was the first to perceive the far-reaching implications of the Urdu-Hindi controversy as the ultimate factor of cultural division between Muslims and Hindus. As early as 1867 he had realised that the linguistic and cultural gulf between the two communities was widening so sharply that it was unreal to imagine that a composite single nationhood could emerge as a result merely of the two communities living together under British rule.[5]

On 12 January 1883, in the course of a discussion on the Central Provinces Local Self-Government Bill in the Legislative Council of Lord Ripon, Syed Ahmad Khan expressed views on the principle of election in its practical application in India : 'The principle of

5. Altaf Husain Hali, *Hayat-i-Javid*, I, 140 ; Syed Ahmad Khan, *Makatib*, ed. Mushtaq Husain (1960), pp. 267-74.

self-government by means of representative institutions is, perhaps, the greatest and noblest lesson which the beneficence of England will teach India.' 'But,' he warned, 'in borrowing from England the system of representative institutions, it is of the greatest importance to remember those socio-political matters in which India is distinguishable from England.' 'India,' he pointed out, was 'a continent in itself, inhabited by vast populations of different races and different creeds. . . . The community of race and creed makes the English people one and the same nation, and the advance of education has rendered smaller differences wholly insignificant in matters connected with the welfare of the country at large. . . . But it is obvious, of course, that the same cannot be said of India.'

Syed Ahmad declared :

'I am convined that the introduction of the principle of election, pure and simple, for representation of various interests on the local boards and district councils, would be attended with evils of greater significance than purely economic considerations. So long as differences of race and creed, and the distinctions of caste form an important element in the socio-political life of India, and influence her inhabitants in matters connected with the administration and welfare of the country at lage, the system of election, pure and simple, cannot be safely adopted. The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community, and the ignorant public would hold Government responsible for introducing measures which might make the differences of race and creed more violent than ever.'[6]

With the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and the advent of elective institutions, Syed Ahmad Khan employed his loyalism to emphasise Muslim political separateness. But his active opposition to the Congress did not begin until 1887 when a Muslim, Badr-ud-Din Tayyibji, was elected its President. Syed Ahmad Khan saw it as the beginning of an erosion in Muslim political solidarity, a disaster for the future of Muslims who were numerically a quarter of the Hindu population and were otherwise back-

6. Mohamed Ali, *Proceedings of Dacca Session of All-India Muslim League, 1906*, pp. 2 and 3. Reprinted for National Archives of Pakistan, Karachi, 1969.

ward educationally, had little experience of political manoeuvring and agitation, and lacked enterprise and economic resources. In a remarkable impromptu speech on 28 December 1887 to the Mohammedan Educational Conference at Lucknow, Syed Ahmad Khan swayed the whole community into deciding once for all their attitude towards the Congress. Even those of his co-religionists who differd from his views on religious, educational and social questions and opposed him violently, followed his lead in politics. It is a paradox that the Ulema who claimed to work for the preservation of Islamic identity did not see the danger inherent in the situation. Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, one of the leading lights of Deoband, was the first to reject Syed Ahmad Khan's plea for political separateness in India and pronounced an injunction in favour of Muslim co-operation with the Indian National Congress provided it did not lead to any infringement of the cannon law.[7]

Syed Ahmad Khan saw through the British policy of *Divide et impera*, which aimed at setting up the Hindus against the Muslims, for the latter, considered responsible for the 'Mutiny,' could not be trusted to co-operate. Lord Dufferin invited Allan Octavian Hume, a retired Civil Servant, in 1885, to set up the Indian National Congress. The first Indian President, W.C. Bannerji, let the cat out of the bag when he wrote:

> 'It will probably be news to many that the Indian National Congress, as it was originally started and it has since been carried on, is in reality the work of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, when that noble man was the Governor General of India. Lord Dufferin had made it a condition with Hume that his name in connection with the scheme of the Congress should not be divulged so long as he remained in the country, and his condition was faithfully maintained.'[8]

The official historian of the Indian National Congress, Dr

7. Hafeez Malik, *Moslem Nationalism in India and Pakistan* (1963), p. 196.

8. W.C. Bannerji, *An Introduction to Indian Politics* (1898).

Pattabhi Sitaramayya, feels unnecessarily embarrassed about its origin when he says that 'it is shrouded in mystery'.[9]

Syed Ahmad Khan's ideas attracted distinguished supporters who came to be known collectively as the Aligarh School. Two of these men matured in the pre-'Mutiny' renaissance at the Delhi College which was closed down by the British after the 'Mutiny'—Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, the novelist, and Maulvi Zakaullah, the historian. A leading figure was the poet Altaf Husain Hali who wrote his famous poem 'The Flow and Ebb of Islam' in 1879, one of the first Urdu poems to depart from the traditions of conventional classicism. Then there was Shibli Numani who created the tradition of Islamic historiography in Urdu.

Syed Ahmad Khan had set out to achieve the following objectives:

(*i*) to protect Islam from the onslaught of Christian missionaries and to prove that it was the one true religion;
(*ii*) to remove the bitter enmity which had arisen between the Muslims and the British for religious or political reasons, and to establish friendly relations between them;
(*iii*) to reinterpret the teachings of Islam and bring them in harmony with modern science and philosophy so that educated Muslims while holding on to their religion, might take a rational and enlightened view of life and meet the demand of the new age;
(*iv*) to persuade Muslims to learn the English language and Western sciences so that they might secure a substantial share in the administration of the country;
(*v*) to maintain Urdu along with English as an associate official language, and to develop it through translations and original writings.[10]

The foundation-stone of M.A.O. College was laid in Aligarh by Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India, on 8 January 1877. But one college was not enough for the needs of seventy million Muslims of India. Syed Ahmad Khan, therefore, decided to carry his message

9. *History of the Congress* (1931), p. 16.
10. S. Abid Hussain, *The Destiny of Indian Muslims* (New York, 1965), pp. 24-25.

to the Indian Muslims through the Mohammedan Educational Conference which he founded in 1886. This was a powerful instrument which was effectively used by the leading intellectuals of the Aligarh School for the purposes of the movement. At the Second Annual Session of the Conference at Lucknow, Syed Ahmad Khan made a speech which was to alter the course of Indian history. Referring to the elective demands of the Indian National Congress he said:

'They want to copy the English House of Lords and the House of Commons. The elected members are to be like members of the House of Commons. Now let us imagine the Viceroy's Council made in this manner. And let us suppose, first of all, that we have Universal Suffrage, as in America, and that all have votes. And let us also suppose that all the Mohammadan electors vote for a Mohammadan member and all Hindu electors vote for a Hindu member, and now count how many votes the Mohammadan member will have and how many the Hindu. It is certain that the Hindu member will have four times as many, because their population is four times as numerous. Therefore, we can mathematically prove that there will be four votes of the Hindu to every one vote for the Mohammadan. And now how can the Mohammadan guard his interests? It will be like a game of dice, in which one man had four dice, and the other only one!'[11]

Some people have argued that it was under the influence of Theodore Beck, the English Principal of the M.A.O. College, that Syed Ahmad Khan turned against the Congress in his old age. This facile assumption has persisted despite an utter lack of historical evidence to support it. Sayyid Tufail Ahmad Manglori, writing during the 1940's, and relying exclusively upon the undocumented testimony of Mir Wilayat Husain, a one-time associate of Syed Ahmad Khan, stated that Beck wanted to accomplish three things: to turn Syed Ahmad Khan away from the Bengalis who had collaborated with Allan Octavian Hume in establishing the Indian National Congress in 1885; isolate him from the national political movement; and to eliminate Moulvi Sami-

11. S. M. Ikram, *Modern Muslim India and the Birth of Pakistan* (Lahore, 1970), pp. 42-43.

ullah, a close associate of Syed Ahmad Khan who, being a powerful member of the Managing Committee, did not allow a free hand to Theodore Beck in the affairs of the College. In order to achieve these aims, according to Manglori, Beck gained control of the *Institute Gazette* and started writing editorials which exposed the Bengalis and their movement. Manglori insinuates that the British Government knighted Syed Ahmad Khan after the Lucknow Session of the Educational Conference in which he exposed the elective demands of the Congress with great effect !'[12]

Dr Abid Hussain, repeating almost verbatim the accusations of Manglori in the *Destiny of Indian Muslims*[13] made an intemperate attack on Syed Ahmad Khan accusing him of 'senility'. He has since conceded that no authentic evidence is available in support of the contention that Syed Ahmad Khan formulated his policies at the suggestion of or under the influence of Beck.[14] Mohamed Ali's own opinion should settle this controversy. He says : 'A very close study of his [Syed Ahmad's] character leads me to declare that he was far from possessing the sycophancy with which his political critics have credited him.'[15]

Two problems exercised the Muslim mind in Victorian India —to read or not to read English was the first and most formidable question. Modern education was the principal point of public controversy. Aligarh was the focus of this activity and remained the centre of Muslim politics well into the twentieth century. The other point of interest was the declining fortune of the contemporary Muslim world with which the Indian Muslim, even in the hour of his own misfortune, felt a deep affinity which was by no means new or unprecedented.

12. Sayyid Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *Musalmanon ka Roshan Mustaqbil* (Delhi, 1945).

13. P. 39.

14. Hafeez Malik, 'Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Contribution to the Development of Muslim Nationalism in India,' *Modern Asian Studies* (London, 1970), Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 142.

15. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 252.

APART from England the only extra-territorial power which impinged on the life of Indian Muslims was the world of Islam, especially Turkey. Unlike Arab lands, Central Asia, India and Indonesia, Turkey never fell under direct European rule. During the second half of the nineteenth century the humiliation of the Muslim world made it more ready to turn to Turkey for solace and inspiration.

From 1830, when the French penetrated North Africa, the Muslims of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Tripolitania had turned their eyes towards Turkey.[16] One of the Western-educated statesmen of Tunisia, Khayreddin Pasha, even became *Sadrazam* (Prime Minister) to Sultan Abdul Hamid who established good relations with Tripolitania and was friendly with the Sanussis.

In the north-east sector of the Islamic world, the conquest of the Turkish Muslim States was being consummated by Russia. By the 1850's and 1860's, the Khans of these States had begun sending emissaries to the Caliph in search of interest and help. Several educated men from the Turkish-speaking territories that had fallen under Russian rule—such as the Caucasus, Azerbijan, Crimea, Kazan and Turkestan—took refuge in Turkey and helped arouse concern for the condition of Muslim countries. In the south-east, as Toynbee points out, 'a sentimental attachment to an idealized conception of the Ottoman Empire began to appear—among the Indian Muslim diaspora—Shia as well as Sunni—as a psychological compensation' for the loss of their former imperial dominion to the British. The Ottoman Empire was, indeed, the only political rallying point on which the Muslim victims of Western and Russian imperialism could fall back. Even in her nineteenth-century infirmity, Turkey was by far and away the most powerful, efficient and enlightened Muslim State in existence.[17]

In the Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca of July 1774, for the first

16. 1. See Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London, 1945), VIII, 693.

17. Ibid.

time in its history, Turkey gained recognition of its claim that the Sultan was to be the Caliph of all Muslims. Article 3 of the Treaty laid down :

'As to the practices of religion, the Tartars being of the same religion as the Muslims, and his Sultanian Majesty being as Supreme Mohammedan Caliph, they are to conduct themselves towards him as is prescribed in the rules of their religion, without, however, compromising their political and civil independence as has been laid down.'

This claim by the Ottoman Sultan was new. Since the end of the classical Caliphate in the first century of Islam, there had been no single universally recognised head of the Islamic community. Each monarch was a Caliph in his own realm. The assertion of such authority beyond a Sultan's frontier was a departure for the first time since the fall of the Abbasids, to establish a universal Islamic leadership, and to claim it for the house of Usman. It is at this time that the legend appeared that the last of the Caliphs in Cairo had transferred the Caliphate to the Ottoman Sultan Selim I in 1571.[18]

Sultan Abdul Hamid fully made use of the situation. Appeal to the loyalty of Muslims abroad could help consolidate his position at home. By winning an important body of Muslim opinion in European colonies he could create difficulties for the Imperial powers and forestall possible action against Turkey. The Sultan sent emissaries to Algeria, Egypt, India and even Japan. The Greco-Turkish War of 1897 aroused widespread concern all over the Muslim world. Ottoman victories were celebrated in many lands, and were followed by stirrings or outbreaks amongst the Muslims in India and the East Indies, Turkestan, Madagascar and Algeria.

By 1876 the cause of reform was a century old in Turkey. It

18. This legend, which first appeared in D'Ohsson's *Tableau General de l'Empire Ottoman* (1788), pp. 269-70, was probably intended to support this claim; C. P. Becker, *Bartholds Studien*, and R. Tschudi, *Das Chalifat* (1926), p. 20.

had already a tradition, an impetus and an achievment of its own. But with the dismissal of the Parliament by Sultan Abdul Hamid on 14 February 1878, the causes both of reform and of liberty seemed to be lost. The Parliament was not to meet again for thirty years. By the end of the nineteenth century the reformers were dead; France, their patron and guide, was defeated, and a mood of reaction had set in against any foreign intervention. Greater stress was laid on the Islamic character of the Empire and the need for Islamic unity. Namik Kemal speaks of the union of Islam as being a general objective in his day. The Crimean War, the Indian 'Mutiny,' the conquests of Britain, France and Russia in Muslim lands, all helped to foster those ideas. The causes of the decline of Islam were to be sought, not in any internal weaknesses or defects, but in the aggressive imperialism of Christian Europe, which sought to enslave the Muslims and destroy Islam. The task was to drive out the foreign invaders, restore the true Islamic faith—and, some added, to reunite all the Muslims in a single State, under its lawful sovereign, the Caliph.[19]

Syed Ahmad Khan was a great admirer of Turkey. He was perhaps the first Indian to don a Turkish cap—the Fez—and made it part of the students' uniform in Aligarh. He constantly published articles on Turkey in his *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*. The Indian Muslims condemned Gladstone's campaign against Turkey. They saw in the Armenian rebellion against the Turks and the war waged against her by Greece a revival of the Christian Crusades. But when many influential Muslims began to look upon the Sultan of Turkey as the Caliph of Islam, Syed Ahmad Khan became uneasy and warned his compatriots against a pan-Islamic adventure, which, without helping Turkey, could complicate their own relations with the British. 'We are devoted and loyal subjects of the British Government,' he declared, 'we are not the subjects of Sultan Abdul Hamid II . . . he neither had, nor can have, any spiritual jurisdiction over us as Khalifah. His title of Caliph is effective only in his

19. Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1968), pp. 340-43.

own land and only over the Muslims under his sway.'[20] He argued that the real Caliphate was limited only to the first four Orthodox Caliphs. Shibli, who later turned against Syed Ahmad Khan, supported these views in the 1890's. Al-Afghani dubbed him as a British collaborator on this score.

Here it is pertinent to say a word about Jamal-ud-Din al-Afghani's clash with Syed Ahmad Khan. In his efforts to meet the modern situations and problems Syed Ahmad Khan tried to interpret the Quran and Islam on the basis of reason. In laying stress upon science as the characteristic feature of Western education he had urged his compatriots to assimilate and welcome it on the ground that reason was an attribute of God and that Nature was His handiwork. His followers came contemptuously to be dubbed as *necharis*, the followers of Nature, by his detractors who accused him of compromising a fundamental tenet of Islamic faith. One of them was Jamal-ud-Din al-Afghani who, in a book in Persian published in Bombay in 1878, mounted an attack on Syed Ahmad Khan and his work. In *Radd-i-Nechariyyah*—the Refutation of the Naturalists—the *nechari* encompasses men of every variety of thought from the Greek atomists to Charles Darwin, from Mazdak to Rousseau; every group movement from Jews to Freemasons, from Ismailis to Mormons, from Liberals to Socialists or Communists. Everywhere, whether in ancient Greece or Iran, Christendom or Islam, India or Turkey, these *necharis* were traitors to religion and society, detractors of God, destroyers of law and morality.

Afghani visited Hyderabad in 1879 but never met Syed Ahmad Khan whom he continued to attack. The people he met were political nonentities who exerted no political or religious influence on Muslim India at this time.[21]

Afghani is a controversial and enigmatic character. He is

20. *Akhiri Mazamin*, pp. 32-33.

21. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* (London, 1967), p. 126.

credited with the authorship of revolutionary movement in many Muslim lands including Turkey. But there are some contradictions. If Afghani's opposition to the Shah of Persia's policy of granting tobacco monopoly to foreign investors was what had made him a revolutionary,[22] it is difficult to understand why he did not oppose the autocracy of Sultan Abdul Hamid and his policy to grant monopolies and railway concessions to foreigners.

Afghani visited Turkey twice—once in 1870 and again in 1892, the first time at the invitation of men who led the *Tanzimat* movement and the second time at the invitation of Sultan Abdul Hamid. The contradiction between the Afghani of 1870 and that of 1892 is too glaring to be explained away. In 1870 the Shaikh-ul-Islam would gladly have signed a *fatwa* for his execution. At that time Afghani owed his life to the 'men of modern ideas' whom he reviled in his book 'Refutation,' the authorised Turkish translation of which was presented to Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1892. The Turkish version contained the following sentence which did not appear in the original: 'And these traitors met their deserved punishment by the justice-enforcing hand.' The justice-enforcing hand was that of the despotic Caliph and the 'traitors' were Midhat Pasha and Suleyman Pasha—men who, like all *necharis*, had sold their country to its enemies for petty gains. Abdul Hamid had just court-martialled both, and had sentenced one to death and the other to exile, but even he had not gone to the extent of accusing them of treason.[23]

Pan-Islamic ideas were the culmination in Turkey of the *Tanzimat* doctrine of fusing Muslims and non-Muslims into an Ottoman nation. Only Muslims, according to the Pan-Islamists, should unite to form the national basis of the Ottoman Empire under the Caliph who was also head of the Empire. A variant idea of pan-Islam was taking shape outside Turkey with a different form from the Turkish, and Afghani had connections with it. The

22. E. G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-8*, pp. 403-04.
23. Niyazi Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 267.

birthplace of the idea was Cairo and its author was, strangely enough, an English poet – Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. The difference between Blunt and Sultan Abdul Hamid lay in the question of the legitimacy of the Caliphate. Blunt advocated that the Caliphate belonged to the Arabs, or rather to the Quraysh. It was not a political but a religious or spiritual authority. The pontifical authority of the Caliph could extend over all Muslims whether they were living under an indigenous ruler or a European Government. This was the clue to the Western concept of Islamic reformation. If a spiritual unity were achieved under the Caliph's pontificate, Islam would flourish as a religion, and Muslims would be freed from the burden of a desire for a State. They would also be freed from Abdul Hamid's rule.

Blunt met Afghani in 1883. He arranged a conference with the top men of the British Foreign Office in London. Afghani accepted a proposal to go with a mission on behalf of the Foreign Office to win the rebellious Mahdi in Sudan. But the British Government did not encourage Afghani, who in disgust accepted Abdul Hamid's invitation and helped him to suppress the *necharis* in Turkey until his death in 1897, a year before Syed Ahmad Khan departed from the scene of Muslim politics in India.[24]

II

IT WAS in such a world that Mohamed Ali was born on 10 December 1878 in a feudal family in Rampur State. After the 'Mutiny,' Rampur attracted poets and litterateurs from Delhi, a hundred miles away, for it was one of the places where refuge and asylum were still available. It was a virtual oasis in the barren and barbarian surroundings where no man's honour and life was safe, particularly if he belonged to the Muslim nobility.

With an uncanny instinct of self-preservation, the Ruler of Rampur had helped the British during the events of 1857-58. Mohamed Ali's grandfather, Ilahi Bakhsh, a courtier at Rampur,

24. Ibid., Ch. 10, 11.

rendered valuable assistance to the British Government in the hour of their crisis. As a reward he received a piece of land which was later to be sold by his grandson who used the proceeds to fight the British Government.

Rampur was one of the 562 Indian States which had now become dependent on the Crown instead of the East India Company. While British India was administered from Whitehall through the Secretary of State, the Indian States had treaty relations with the Crown. This, however, did not make them any more independent than the rest of India. The Princes held their Courts and administered their States through their courtiers, who were appointed and dismissed at the pleasure of the ruler. Mohamed Ali's family was closely connected with the administration of the Rampur State since the days of his grandfather. Mohamed Ali's own father, Abdul Ali Khan, the youngest of five brothers, was a favourite courtier of Nawab Yusuf Ali Khan, the Ruler of Rampur. Like other members of the feudal aristocracy who did not have to fend for themselves, he was married while still in his teens to the young daughter of another noble in the State. He lived a life of ease and comfort. He was barely thirty when Mohamed Ali was born. There could not have been much excitement in the family for he was the sixth child and the fifth son.

The atmosphere in Abdul Ali Khan's house was typically feudal. In the male quarters the father received a constant stream of visitors—friends, sycophants, poets, literary men and those who called on business or were invited for meals or just pleasant conversation. Quail-fighting was one of the few sports in the *mardana*, where no women were ever allowed. The women lived in the *zenana*, the female quarter, with their children and maid-servants. There they entertained their lady friends, whiled away their time in cutting betel nuts, chewing betel leaves, supervising servants, looking after their children and gossiping about trivial events in the neighbourhood. Mohamed Ali grew up in the *zenana* under the vigilant eye of his mother who was practically illiterate. Five sons and a number of cousins romped all over the place,

playing pranks and making endless noise. The only time when there was peace in the house was when the children gathered round the mother who narrated with great charm and grace the old-world tales to them—romances from history, stories of the Prophets, full of pathos, suspense, dramatic beauty, and all with a moral at the end which helped the children imbibe points of ethics and good conduct imperceptibly.

In such an atmosphere the mother had a role to play in bringing up the children; and the father who remained mostly away in the male quarters hardly exerted any influence. This was certainly the case with Mohamed Ali who had little cause to remember his father because he was hardly two when Abdul Ali Khan suddenly died after a brief attack of cholera on 20 August 1880.

Abadi Bano Begum, *Bi Amman* to Mohamed Ali and later to the whole of India, became a widow at the age of twenty-seven. She now had half a dozen unruly children to look after. Her means were meagre because her husband apparently liked good living and had left a debt of some Rs. 30,000, an enormous sum towards the end of the nineteenth century; and yet this young lady was able to cope with the new situation. She completely transformed her life. She shut down the new house that her husband had recently built to receive his friends. She adopted a rigorously ascetic way of life—very simple fare and a simpler dress, without, however, sacrificing her own essential geniality and the joy of living.

Having remained confined all her life to the four walls of the *zenana*, and having been devoid of any education as such, it is remarkable that she should have been the first mother in Rampur State to think of sending her son to an English school rather than to the traditional *madrasah*. Not much choice was available to a contemporary Muslim student. He could join the most pre-eminent tradiitional school of Shah Waliullah at Delhi where emphasis was laid primarily on the teaching of the Quran, *tafsir* and *hadis*. He could go to the Farangi Mahal School in Lucknow which was preoccupied with orthodox scholarship rather than society or politics. Here rationalism and jurisprudence were counterbalanced

by mysticism. Another opening was the old school of Khayrabad which specialised in the studies of medieval philosophy and logic [25] The latest was a school established in Deoband in 1867, a few years earlier than Syed Ahmad's College at Aligarh. It sought to synthesise the traditions of the schools of Delhi, Lucknow and Khayrabad. The entire syllabus consisted of 106 texts which did not include any on modern sciences. In all these schools the medium of instruction was Urdu. In Aligarh alone was Western education available. The student had to make a choice. By the end of the nineteenth century it seemed that the Muslims had made a choice of Aligarh and all that it stood for.

After the uprising of 1857 the general atmosphere in Muslim India was one of brooding, anxiety and suspicion and the fear of the unknown future. Even though the nobility in Rampur had no direct experience of the deprivation, frustration and humiliation of the rest of their brethren in Muslim India, they sensed the mighty change which was there for everyone to see.

It was barely a year before Mohamed Ali's birth that Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India, had laid the foundation-stone of Aligarh College on 8 January 1877. It is a marvel that in the seclusion of the *zenana* an uneducated mother should have come to the conclusion that it was time to abandon the old ways and accept the new challenge. Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Mohamed Ali's eldest brother, was the first boy in Rampur State who was sent to Bareilly for English education which was not available in Rampur itself. When Shaukat Ali Khan, the elder brother of Mohamed Ali, was to follow Zulfiqar Ali, the uncle who was managing the property refused to sanction an allowance, 'remarking, in all sincerity, but also with all bitterness characteristic of the times and more specially of the people, that one "infidel" was bad enough in a family. But the mother was determined and secretly pawned some personal jewellery with the help of the maidservant of a Hindu neighbour, and packed off the second would-be "infidel" of the

25. Mahbub Rizvi, *Tarikh-i-Deoband* (1952), p. 104.

family also to Bareilly, with the assurance that she had enough money in her own hands now to pay for Shaukat's schooling at least for some time to come. When the uncle had been thus outwitted by a resolute woman he got her trinkets released from pawn and paid for the schooling of both his nephews from the proceeds of her property. And so, when yet another "infidel" sought perdition, he accepted the inevitable.'[26]

But before Mohamed Ali joined the two 'infidels' he went through the traditional education in the *maktab* and joined, for a few months, a school which had recently been set up in Rampur for English education. The school was opened in March 1888 by one General Muhammad Azim-ud-Din Khan. It provided English education up to sixth class, and two years later it was raised to the status of a middle school.

It was here that Mohamed Ali made his debut as a formal student. It was here also that he made his debut as a writer and speaker. His earliest piece of writing is an essay on the 'Need of Modern English Education' which is dated 18 August 1890. This essay is printed along with the Report of the Inspector of Schools in the *Rampur State Gazette*.[27] Reading this brief essay in Urdu today one could easily mistake it for a piece of writing by Syed Ahmad Khan. The little boy quotes two Persian verses and argues logically, coherently and powerfully for giving up a system of traditional education which depends on learning by rote and does not seek to encourage the use of critical faculty of a young student. Mohamed Ali rails at the old romantic values of Muslim society and pleads eloquently for realism and reform.

Having stayed for a few months in the school at Rampur, he joined his brothers at a school in Bareilly, some forty miles from his home, to learn English and the usual subjects of arithmetic, history and geography. He was about to enter his twelfth year at this time.

26. *My Life : A Fragment*, p. 5.
27. 22 September 1890, Vol. II, No. 38, p. 14.

While at Rampur, Mohamed Ali received the full impact of the literary and cultural environment in which his family lived. The institution of *mushaira*, poetic symposium, was a popular and favourite pastime, and Mohamed Ali must have seen many of these sessions both in his own house and at other places during his childhood. His eldest brother was a regular pupil of Dagh Dehlavi, the celebrated Urdu poet who did not live far from their house. At the Court of Rampur flourished such eminent poets of Urdu as Ameer, Tasleem, Uruj and Dagh. Both the Delhi and Lucknow schools of Urdu poetry were richly represented in a State which had become the refuge of litterateurs after the tragedy of 1857.

For the first time when Mohamed Ali accompanied his eldest brother Zulfiqar to the house of Dagh, the poet inquired of the young boy whether he was interested in poetry. The little boy promptly recited some of Dagh's own poems which he had learnt from his eldest brother.

At the age of ten Mohamed Ali had started dabbling in poetry; and judging from his first attempt at prose in the Rampur school, he could not have fared too badly at poetry for he certainly had a sense of rhythm and enough knowledge of prosody to produce some readable verse. The boy was endowed with keen intelligence and he gave evidence, early enough in his life, of a sensitive and sharp mind. He inherited a prodigious memory from his mother and was known, even as a young student at the Bareilly school, for his unfailing sense of humour and repartees.

He was not long at the school in Bareilly. In the summer of 1890, at the age of eleven and a half years, Mohamed Ali went to school at Aligarh where his two elder brothers were in the College. The Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College was founded in 1877, while the school started on 24 May 1875 with eleven students. The first-year class in the College started in 1878 and the first graduate who was a Hindu, Babu Ishwari Parshad, came out in 1882. The reason for the small number of students was the intense opposition of the aristocracy and the Muslim orthodoxy to English

education while the middle class could not afford the expense of sending their children to a boarding house. Aligarh was not the large sprawling university that it is today. In fact, it was not a university at all when Mohamed Ali went to school in 1890. There were no more than three hundred students in the school, and nearly one hundred were Hindus. In the College at this time about one hundred students pursued their studies, and out of these at least thirty were Hindus.[28]

When Mohamed Ali came to school the Principal was Theodore Beck, who had taken over in 1883 from Mr Siddons, and was a complete contrast to his overbearing predecessor, for he mixed freely with the students and took keen personal interest in their welfare. So great was his love for his students that Hali, the poet of Muslim renaissance, praised his 'motherly love' for the children at Aligarh.[29]

Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of the College, was hardly available to the students as he was mostly away from Aligarh on account of his preoccupations with the Imperial Council in Simla and Calcutta. Moulvi Samiullah Khan, a close colleague of Syed Ahmad Khan, was in charge of the boarding house.

Principal Beck was responsible for founding the College Union which was later to produce eminent speakers including Mohamed Ali. Beck was a Quaker and a typical 'empire-builder,' an expression used by the *Times* in its obituary notice when he died in Simla on 2 september 1899. He was Principal of the College throughout Mohamed Ali's stay at Aligarh from 1890 to 1898. Mohamed Ali,

28. See article on Syed Ahmad Khan and Hindu-Muslim Unity by Haroon Khan Sherwani in the 'Special Aligarh Number' of the *Aligarh Magazine*, 1953-54, pp. 236-37.

29. *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 18 December 1888 :

نہ دیکھی ہوں جنھوں نے شفقت و طاعت کی تصویریں
وہ بک اور ان کے شاگردوں کو باہم ہم سخن دیکھیں
مجسم دیکھنی ہو شکلِ مہرِ مادری جن کو
وہ بچوں سے سلوکِ آرنلڈ و ماریسن دیکھیں

who quarrelled with many people and who generally resented the British masters, was apparently on good terms with Principal Beck because he continued this association with the Beck family even after leaving Aligarh. Shaukat Ali, his elder brother, is known to have taken the whole Cricket XI to Principal Beck's grave in Simla in 1902. The inscription[30] on Beck's tombstone in Simla is symbolic of the man who so greatly endeared himself to the students.

Of the British Professors at the Aligarh College during Mohamed Ali's stay one of the most learned was Professor T.W. Arnold who joined Aligarh only two years before Mohamed Ali did. So completely did Arnold identify himself with the life of the College that he used to put on Indian dress. Arnold, an ardent Christian himself, was responsible for introducing a daily lecture on the Quran. He persuaded Shibli to speak for half an hour every day before the beginning of the College classes. Mohamed Ali as a schoolboy attended Shibli's lectures which were to leave an indelible impression on the young mind. It was in Aligarh that Arnold wrote his famous book, *The Preaching of Islam*. Arnold stayed for seven years in Aligarh and then left for Lahore to teach Philosophy at the Government College and head the Oriental College.

Professor Theodore Morrison, who was Head of the English Department, was known as 'soldier Morrison' because of his keen interest in riding and javelin-throw. He was the man who introduced football in Aligarh. He helped students in finding employment and used to make strong recommendations to different Government departments. This patronage rather than his ability in teaching English endeared him to his students but Mohamed Ali was certainly not one of them. He became Principal after Mohamed Ali had left the College.

From among the Indian Professors the most outstanding was

30. Men keep stone on stone and build a house,
And people call it my house ; neither my house nor thine,
But only the place of shelter for the birds to pass the night !

Shibli Numani who became an Assistant Professor of Arabic in 1883 at a salary of Rs 40 p.m. He stayed in Aligarh for sixteen years and left only after the death of Syed Ahmad Khan. Shibli was born in a prosperous family whose annual income was estimated to be Rs 30,000 as against Rs 15,000 which was the income of Mohamed Ali's father. Shibli's younger brother went to England for education while he himself received traditional education in India. Since he did not go to an English school, Shibli could not find any employment and ended up in spite of his brilliance and attainments, as a copy-writer in a Collector's Court on a meagre salary of Rs 15 p.m. at the age of twenty-five. He was, therefore, very happy to have had an opportunity to work in the Aligarh College. It was here that he found a great friend in Professor Arnold who introduced him to modern methods of criticism and taught him a little French. During Shibli's stay in Aligarh his relations with Syed Ahmad Khan were most cordial. He placed his library at Shibli's disposal. Both ate at least one meal together and freely indulged in discussions. There was a great disparity between the age of the two but there was much intellectual affinity. Syed Ahmad Khan was senior even to Shibli's father for Shibli was only twenty-five years of age when he came to Aligarh and Syed Ahmad was over sixty. It was at the recommendation of Syed Ahmad that Shibli was awarded, at the age of thirty-seven, the much-coveted title of Shams-ul-Ulema (the sun of the scholars).

Shibli was a sensitive soul. He was a lonely man, aloof and retiring. He did not mix freely and was on that account unpopular with the students. His relationship with Mohamed Ali is, therefore, an exception rather than a rule.

It was during his stay at Aligarh that Shibli wrote *Muslamanon ki Guzashtah Talim*, and other pamphlets, *Al-Mamun*, *Al-Numan* and most of *Al-Faruq*. In the speeches of Shibli edited by Syed Sulaiman Nadvi one finds ample evidence that Shibli freely criticised Syed Ahmad's concept of education, but the differences did not lead to any personal bitterness.

After leaving Aligarh Shibli opposed Syed Ahmad's view that the Muslims should remain aloof from the Indian National Congress. He stood for participation and attacked the Muslim League as a coterie of toadies and conservatives.

MOHAMED ALI spent eight years at Aligarh, four in school and the remaining in College. His most memorable experience in school was his encounter with Shibli Numani. He never formally learnt at his feet but a lucky chance enabled him to be one of his pupils. He used to accompany his two elder brothers from the Dining Hall regularly after breakfast to attend, in the Principal's Hall, Shibli's lectures on the exegesis of the Quran. He was the most eager and punctual schoolboy, in fact the only one, to attend these classes from behind a door, for the lectures were meant for senior students of the College. He hurriedly read Shibli's life of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mamun in Shaukat Ali's room when the brother was away, and startled him by translating, with astonishing accuracy, some Arabic verses that Shaukat was reciting. He himself was writing Urdu verse at this time when he was only eleven years of age. When this was mentioned to Shibli he sent for the young boy. He first asked him the names of al-Mamun's children, and having received a correct answer he proceeded to ask for the family tree of the Caliph. Mohamed Ali passed this test of memory. He was then given an Urdu verse for composing a *ghazal* in the same metre and rhyme, and here again he passed the test of prosody and a taste for poetry. Shibli was plainly pleased with the performance of the young boy whom he invited to dine with him one evening with his two brothers. After this the young schoolboy did not have to stand behind a door to listen to Shibli's lectures; he was invited to come inside and he felt elated at being treated with the dignity of an undergrad for whom Shibli lectured every morning for half an hour in the Principal's Hall.[31]

It was through Shibli that Mohamed Ali made his first acquaintance of the meaning of the Quran and this was to have

31. *My Life: A Fragment*, pp. 26-27.

a far-reaching influence on his later life. But for these lectures the Quran practically remained a closed book to the students at Aligarh. One of the reasons for this neglect was that Syed Ahmad Khan, in his anxiety to placate his critics, denied himself even the membership of the Committee which regulated religious instruction. In this way a very colourless Committee of the Ulema had prescribed some elementary text-books. English was the first language and, ridiculously enough, all subjects were taught in it. The accent being on English, it was no wonder that religious instruction which was provided once a week remained both inadequate and uninteresting. The result was that the theology hour was spent more on writing humorous verse or drawing rude and rough caricatures than listening to the venerable pedagogue.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to reconstruct the atmosphere at Aligarh during Mohamed Ali's stay there. The material is indeed scanty. Graham's and Hali's biographies of Syed Ahmad Khan do not throw any light on the reactions and responses of the young students to the movement that had produced the College. There is no direct evidence about the climate of opinion among the students about the Indian National Congress or the contemporary events in Turkey and the Muslim world. Shibli's biographers have exaggerated the differences between Syed Ahmad Khan and Shibli, but they too do not give any indication of the interest or response of the students themselves. Syed Ahmad Khan had been condemned as a traitor to the Muslim cause by Jamal-ud-Din al-Afghani. Shibli alone among his lieutenants had direct contact with Muhammad Abduh—the disciple of al-Afghani. He was to help inspire later a movement in which Mohamed Ali played a leading role, but at this stage there is no mention of any controversy that the students might have shared about Syed Ahmad's view on the problem in contemporary Turkey. All that one knows is that the students had frequent animated discussions about Western literature, science and philosophy, and nearer home when they discussed Indian politics they did so with an eye on the claims of the various contending communities in India

rather than the claims of the Indian people against the British Government. There was a consensus, it seems, on loyalty to the British Government, but it is not clear whether this included a moratorium on all interest in the affairs of Islam outside India.

It is fairly certain, however, that the Muslims had decided to move with the times: they had begun to shake themselves free from the paralysing grip of the past. They seemed to realise that the spirit of the fight had changed. The weapons were new and so were the ways to use these weapons. Political strength now lay in the counting of heads. It was, therefore, easy for the Hindu students to pose as India's champions while the Muslim, eager to maintain his cultural identity, had to formulate even his right to live in terms of apology.[32] Apart from this dilemma which was often discussed by students at Aligarh, the overwhelming impression that one forms from contemporary sources is not that of a conscientious community of students dedicated to the ideals of Aligarh. Most of them were sons of rich men who alone could afford to send them to boarding houses. They dressed well, adopted the English way of life, played English games,—Shaukat Ali was the legendary Captain of the Cricket XI,—participated in debates in the College Union. Some, including Mohamed Ali, contributed articles to the College monthly, and relied on their English Professors to recommend them for jobs in the Civil Service. The most ambitious of them went to England after graduation and tried to compete for the Indian Civil Service, the last word in prestige and authority. Akbar Allahabadi's satire on the hopes and aspirations of the students at Aligarh may be a little harsh but by and large it sums up a contemporary reality :[33]

> 'What marvels have our friends achieved,
> They graduated, joined Service, earned pension and passed away !'

32. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 67.

33. کیا کہیں احباب کیا کار نمایاں کر گئے
بی اے ہوئے ، نوکر ہوئے ، پنشن ملی پھر مر گئے !

This is not to suggest that Aligarh did not produce a fine amalgam of the East and West in many things, but it would not be wrong to say that in general the students were indifferent to politics, a field which was still considered seditious by the English Principals and Professors who wielded influence out of all proportion to their numbers or intellectual quality. But, nevertheless, the influences imbibed in Aligarh at the end of the nineteenth century were to express themselves in another decade for unmistakably the poets, historians, litterateurs and politicians of the movement of Muslim nationalism sprang from Aligarh.

A school-mate of Mohamed Ali, Sir Muhammad Yaqub (later Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly of India), recalls that Mohamed Ali used to play the truant for most of the year and worked only for a couple of months before examinations which he passed regularly with credit, much to the chagrin of his studious class-fellows. Another school-mate, Syed Sajjad Haidar Yildrim, the well-known Urdu novelist, knew Mohamed Ali to be a good student and a good sportsman. He had an irrepressible sense of humour which often led him into trouble, for those who could not appreciate a joke reported him to his elder brother who gave him a sound spanking.[34] The boy who began with reading poems borrowed from his brother Zulfiqar soon blossomed into a poet of some standing. In the theology hour he wrote humorous verse, drew rude caricatures of his pet aversions including the pedagogue himself. Mohamed Ali lvoed an argument. He asked awkward questions in the class, indulged in animated discussions with the students and the staff, made fiery and sometime flippant speeches in the Union and wrote for the College magazine. Every year he regularly earned a small scholarship as one of the best boys in the class, but even so he surprised everyone when he stood first in the University of Allahabad in the B.A. Examination. Ordinarily he would have secured a nomination to some post

34. Allah Bakhsh Yusufi. *The Life of Maulana Mohamed Ali Jauhar* (Karachi, 1970), p. 38.

in the Provincial Civil Service like his brother Shaukat, but now that he had achieved such a spectacular success, Mohamad Ali was deemed deserving of the prize of higher education in England.

Mohamed Ali was now twenty. His brother Shaukat Ali made a big sacrifice in undertaking, on his meagre salary, to send the younger brother to England. The overriding consideration was a secure career, and there was nothing better in the world than the much-coveted Indian Civil Service. The prospects fired the imagination of the family which hoped that the sacrifices they were making would be rewarded one day when the boy became part of the prestigious and powerful establishment. Mohamed Ali richly shared this ambition. It was the dream of all young Indians to enter the Indian Civil Service, and Mohamed Ali was now being afforded the rare opportunity of a prolonged stay in England, the fountain of power and the source and centre of the civilisation about which Syed Ahmad had waxed so eloquent.

Mohamed Ali arrived in London in September 1898 and stayed at 82, Bendesbury Villas, Kilburn, for about two months. Mian Fazl-i-Husain, who was later to play a notable role in the history of Indian Muslims, was also staying in the same house and he too had come to England to compete for the Indian Civil Service. In Fazl-i-Husain's unpublished Diary, so kindly lent to me by his son and biographer, Mian Azim Husain, there are some interesting entries which throw light on the life of Mohamed Ali during his brief stay in London.

The first entry appears on 21 September 1898. Mohamed Ali is described as a 'gentleman, graduate of Aligarh College, resident of Rampur'. The family which was maintaining the establishment at Kilburn had apparently connections with India, and students preparing for the I.C.S. seemed to stay here. One Mr Hayms, described as Headmaster of the County High School, was the owner of the house where Miss Beck, daughter of Principal Beck of Aligarh College, seems to have been a frequent visitor.

Fazl-i-Husain refers to several 'exceedingly pleasant evenings'

talking of literature, philosophy and politics. On 24 September 1898, Fazl-i-Husain records: 'In the evening we (Mohamed Ali and his two friends and myself) went to dine at Miss Beck's . . . we were all clad in dinner suits. Mr. Mohamed Ali was already an intimate of the house and we three were rather new.' He then describes the dinner party at some length. Among other guests he mentions Mrs Arnold, mother of Professor Sir Thomas Arnold. Miss Arnold is described as a young lady under twenty 'well brought up and very well educated. She is of a good cheerful temperament laying claims to no very particular talents and being very entertaining'.

Mohamed Ali is next mentioned on 25 September 1898, when he accompanied Fazl-i-Husain to see off the Arnolds who had come to the house for a dinner with the boys. The entry for 8 October is interesting. 'Mr. Mohamed Ali again and again asked me to go with him to be photographed. But I was decided to have no photos at all, so I made an excuse, but he won't have it and was cross with me, nay, even went so far as to talk nonsense and make foolish jokes.' The exuberance of Mohamed Ali was soon forgiven by the serious introvert that Fazl-i-Husain was because the same evening they went together to the Becks. On 9 October Mohamed Ali again figures in the 'Diary'. They both went to Coopers at Richmond for dinner. Fazl-i-Husain records, 'Mrs. Cooper was very jolly and very entertaining.' On returning home the same evening some young neighbours are stated to have dropped in. Mohamed Ali introduced them to Fazl-i-Husain who did not seem to like the company. 'They all talked boyish nonsense of athletics and nothing else. I was feeling ra her sickly when I went to bed.' The next day, 10 October 1898, a farewell party was given to Mohamed Ali on the eve of his departure for Oxford. Said-uz-Zafar and Abdul Vahid made speeches on this occasion. 'Miss Julia, a niece of Mr. Hayms, came in and I was introduced to her. We had singing too and all was very pleasant.' On 11 October 1898, Fazl-i-Husain went to the railway station at Paddington to see off Mohamed Ali, who is described as 'a

jolly good fellow, very quick in making friends'. Fazl-i-Husain, however, does not consider Mohamed Ali as a 'deep man' and laments that 'such character is never secure from accidents which sometime happen to be rather unpleasant.'

Records held by the University reveal that Mohamed Ali matriculated as a member of Oxford University in November 1899, obtained a Second in Modern History in 1902, and the degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred upon him on 30 October 1913.[35]

Little is known of Mohamed Ali's life in Lincoln's College beyond the fact that he read a few papers, participated in several debates and gathered round him a set of Indian students and founded a society called 'Nauratan' after the style of the Great Mughal. Among the nine Courtiers of Mohamed Ali were Fateh Singh Gaekwad, the son of the ruler of Baroda, Kunwar Jadish Parshad of Moradabad, Rane of Gujerat, Bhaba of Bombay, Qamar Shah and Abdul Vahid Khan. Abdul Vahid Khan, to whom Fazl-i-Husain refers in his Diary as a friend of Mohamed Ali, was a resident of Rampur. He belonged to General Azimullah's family and was a classmate of Mohamed Ali at Oxford. One of the English contemporaries of Mohamed Ali who was later a senior Civil Servant in India, and was Deputy Commissioner of Betul where Mohamed Ali was held as a prisoner, testified that Mohamed Ali lived in style at Oxford.

By all accounts Mohamed Ali greatly enjoyed his stay at Oxford. He was an exuberant, outgoing character and freely exposed himself to University life. He was popular and was sought after and easily made friends. Thanks to an English spring he failed in the Indian Civil Service examination, a veritable calamity, a rude end to all the expectations that his Big Brother had built round him. It is hard to describe Shaukat Ali's deep disappointment on receiving the news. But the mother, resolute and realistic as ever, lifted up his heart. What had happened after all, she

35. A letter to the author from Rector, Licoln's College, Oxford.

remonstrated; the heavens had not fallen if the boy had failed to make the grade. It could have been worse. What if, in the land of infidels, he had renounced his religion! Ask him to return, she advised, for his *fiance* was waiting for more than three years and it was time that he got married—a simple woman's remedy for all frustrations !

Little did Shaukat Ali realise at this time that Mohamed Ali's loss was the gain of his country. In failing to get into the I.C.S., Mohamed Ali was in good company. Even the serious hardworking Fazl-i-Husain, who did little else than study, had failed. And so had eminent men like Manmohan Ghose, C.R. Das, Sir Shadi Lal, Arbindo Ghose and Sir Shah Muhammad Sulaiman. But it was little consolation at this time to Mohamed Ali or his family for no one imagined that he would make the mark that he later did in the public life of his country.

In deference to the wishes of his mother, Mohamed Ali returned to India in January 1902, and got married to the daughter of a cousin, Azmat Ali Khan, who was the favourite of both his parents.[36] This was by no means the traditional loveless marriage arranged by the mother; it was Mohamed Ali's own choice which he never regretted for a moment during his long and happy married life. After the marriage he went back to Oxford to take his final examination and returned in July of the same year as Mr Mohamed Ali, B.A. (Oxon), the first man from Rampur to achieve this distinction. He was so proud of it that his degree, for the next few years, literally became part of his name.

36. *My Life: A Fragment*, p. 15.

Chapter Two

IN SEARCH OF A ROLE

[1902–1910]

Chief Education Officer in Rampur, 1902—Civil Service in Baroda, 1903-1910—First Public Statement on Muslim Education, 1904—Partition of Bengal, 1905—The Simla Deputation, 1906—The Founding of the Muslim League, 1906—Thoughts on the Present Discontent, 1907—The Strike at Aligarh College, 1907—The Young Turks Movement and the Society of Union and Progress, 1908-1909—Minto-Morley Reforms, 1909—Participation in Muslim League Politics, 1907-1910—Decision to Quit Civil Service, 1910

MOHAMED ALI, who was born and brought up during the Victorian era, now returned, as a young man of twenty-four, to Edwardian India. Lord Curzon was the Viceroy at this time. The tide of imperialism of which Kipling was the prophet was at the flood. British confidence was at its height. Free India, to some, was a light, faint but twinkling, to others a mere will-o'-the-wisp.[1]

By the time Mohamed Ali returned home the worst effects of the famine, which had crippled India during Curzon's first two years, were subsiding. Politically, wrote Curzon, the Indians, even the most advanced of them, were still in the nursery, and no worse fate could befall them than to be mistaken for grown-up men.[2] Mohamed Ali who had taken part in debates at Oxford had not failed to note that hardly anyone in England, least of all the Parliament, worried about India, the brightest jewel in the British Crown. The debates on India were rare and ill-attended. Indian affairs, like foreign affairs, were matters for experts at the Whitehall. India excited but little attention and less controversy.

1. *The Oxford History*, p. 314.

2. Curzon to Godley—27 August 1902; Curzon to Hamilton—3 September 1902; Curzon to King Edward VII—10 September 1902. Quoted in David Dilks, *Curzon in India* (London, 1969).

Mohamed Ali had no notion whatever of his plans. He thought of teaching at Aligarh, his first love. His application was supported by Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, but 'soldier' Morrison, with whom Mohamed Ali never got along as a student, was now the Principal. He black-balled the application. Mohamed Ali then turned to his native State where he became Chief Education Officer. He was happy to have come back home. With his characteristic zeal he set about introducing reforms but having been away from Rampur so long he had forgotten the limitations of a reformer in a feudal set-up. Nawab Hamid Ali Khan, the ruler, was in no mood to introduce any educational reforms, and soon Mohamed Ali left the State in disgust, for the courtiers had begun to weave a web of intrigue around him.

He joined the Civil Service in Baroda, a more enlightened State whose heir apparent, Prince Fateh Singh, was a friend of his at Oxford. He served in Baroda for seven years and filled many places with distinction.

The Gaekwad of Baroda, unlike the Nawab of Rampur, was kind and generous. The old type of Prince, nurtured in the *zenana* and softened by traditional vices, without being tempered by the traditional hazards of war and politics, was now giving way, in many cases, to the man of modern outlook, regarding his domain as an estate to be improved. Princely modernism might be vicious as well as benevolent, leading sometime to Parisian nightlights rather than the administrator's desk. But a new class of men was to be found among the Princes just as a new spirit was to be found in the States themselves. Gaekwad Sayaji Rao (1875-1936) was an example of the new type of forward-looking Prince. He recognised in Mohamed Ali a capable and devoted civil servant, who worked with dedication and imagination, and helped improve the State revenues significantly. Mohamed Ali was grateful for the understanding he received at the hands of the ruler but he was ill at ease as a faceless civil servant. He was not cut out for the anonymous role and yet he did not quite know how and where to seek an outlet for fulfilment and expression. For a while he watched the stage

from the wings.

The parallel development of British paternalism and benevolent despotism of Indian Princes lasted broadly until the early years of the century. Its most striking period was the Curzon era when the paternal idea received its most forceful expression. Lord Curzon's energy extended to the field of States where his reforming impetus was felt in the form of increased interference. In 1903 when Mohamed Ali came to Baroda, Curzon struck an arrangement with the Nizam, by which Berar was virtually incorporated in British India under the fiction of a perpetual lease.[3] This act was too reminiscent of Dalhousie and revived old suspicions of encroachment. In his exuberant self-confidence Curzon was riding too fast and too far. And yet there was little the Princes could do about it. The pomp and pageantry of the Delhi Darbar of 1903, when King Edward VII was proclaimed Emperor of India, was the highlight of Imperial India, where the British, it seemed at the time, were there to stay for ever.

When he was only two years in India after his return from Oxford, Mohamed Ali gave a somewhat hesitating expression to his views in an address delivered at Ahmedabad, on the 'Proposed Mohammadan University'. 'Unless some new force,' he said, '*other than the misleading unity of opposition*, unites this vast continent of India, it will either remain a geographical misnomer, . . . or become a Federation of Religions.' He realised the latent centripetal forces in the Indian communities. 'The lines of cleavage were too deeply marked to permit a unity other than federal; and yet,' he observed, 'the cleavage was not territorial or racial in character, but religious.' He was dreaming the dream of what he later called the 'United *Faiths* of India'.[4]

The same year, presiding over the Bombay Presidency Mohammedan Educational Conference, he criticised the education given in the Indian Universities. He argued that the half-educated

3. *The Oxford History*, p. 302.
4. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 256.

graduates were increasing communal tension. ' " . . . the greater portion of bigotry agitates not the bosoms of the ignorant and the illiterate but excites to fury and to madness the little-learned of the land." And it is not the love of our own religion that makes us quarrel with our fellow-countrymen of other faiths, but self-love and petty personal ambition,' he concluded.[5]

A civil servant in an Indian State was lucky to have a master who was allowing him opportunities for self-expression. In Rampur he would have been throttled.

THE Bengal Presidency had long presented a difficult problem to administrators. Since the grant by Shah Alam in 1765 of the *diwani* of the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, each successive addition to the Company's territory in the north was added to it. By 1900 it had become too unwieldy. The population numbered 78 million; the isolation and difficult communications of East Bengal resulted in neglect which sharply contrasted with the prosperity of West Bengal. West Bengal being mainly Hindu and East Bengal Muslim, the contrast was all the more striking. East Bengal had been reduced to being a mere backyard of Calcutta and the plight of people there was indeed appalling. Lord Curzon's part was to choose one of the many schemes which had been debated too long to meet the problem. He united Assam and Chittagong with fifteen districts of Bengal to form the new province of EasternBengal and Assam. Its capital was at Dacca, its population 31 million and its people predominantly Muslim. The Partition came not because the Muslims of Bengal had clamoured or agitated for it. 'Nevertheless, . . . [it] came to them as a well-deserved though wholly unexpected blessing. Their condition had begun to improve, and with that their ambitions and hopes.' To Mohamed Ali it seemed that, 'like all *noveaux riches*, these political *parvenus*, sometimes . . . strutted about in the peacock manner.'[6]

The Indian National Congress raised a hue and cry. Surendra-

5. Ibid., p. 294.

6. Ibid., p. 261.

nath Bannerjee led the agitation against the partition of Bengal. Monster meetings led on to a *swadeshi* movement and the boycott of foreign cloth, while in the background lurked the menace of terrorism. 'My own belief,' Curzon had written in 1900, 'is that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise.'[7] He was in for a rude awakening. He went home towards the end of 1905, a frustrated, disillusioned and embittered man.

SINCE the Act of 1892, the principle of representation, and in practice the principle of election, had been established in the constitution of the Provincial Legislatures. The growing influence of the Congress and the attention paid it by the Government were a lesson Muslims could not miss. Once more, it seemed they were in danger of being left behind. The knowledge that a new instalment of 'Reforms' was under consideration spurred them to action. The Aga Khan led a Muslim Deputation to the Viceroy, Lord Minto. They made two clear points of policy. First, in all elections, whether for the Legislative Council or for local bodies, the Muslims must be separately represented and their representatives separately elected by purely Muslim electors. Second, the extent of the Muslim representation must be 'commensurate not merely with their numerical strength, but also with their political importance and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of the Empire.'[8] The Viceroy's response was wholly sympathetic. He did not commit himself to any particular method of election, but 'I am firmly convinced,' he said, 'that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent.'[9]

7. *The Oxford History*, p. 315.

8. 'Moslem Deputation to Lord Minto,' October 1906, Indian Statutory Commission, iv, 130-31.

9. Ibid., iv, 132.

The Secretary of State concurred; he tentatively suggested a scheme for a joint electoral college, but he did not press it; and in due course the Muslims found their two demands conceded in the Act of 1909. The Muslims were given what was later to be known as 'weightage,' i.e. more seats than they were entitled to by numbers only, and, while voting also in general constituencies side by side with Hindus, they were to vote for their own members in separate and wholly Muslim constituencies.[10]

The Aga Khan, leader of the Deputation, recalled:

'We were actually aware that we had long been neglected, that to the Hindu majority—as represented by its leaders in the Congress party—we seemed a tiresome splinter in the flesh of the body politic, and that though there was great talk of nationalism we were not even considered in the aspirations that were being fostered, the plans that were being laid. They continued to send to the Viceroy's Legislative Council third-rate yes-men instead of truly representative Muslims, with the result that our separate identity as a community and the status that would have appertained to it had been forgotten by the British.

'For ourselves in 1906 we asked for the establishment of a principle, a principle which would have to be embodied in any legislation as a consequence of these proposals for reform. We asked for adequate and separate representation for Muslims both on local bodies and on the legislative councils, we asked that this representation be secured by a separate communal franchise and electoral roll. In short, we Muslims should have the right of electing our own representatives on it. We conceded that in areas where we were in the majority, like the Punjab and what was then the Province of East Bengal, we would give a certain number of extra seats to the Hindus, and in return we asked that in areas in which there was a big Hindu majority we likewise should be conceded a certain number of extra seats.

'Lord Minto listened with sympathy to our statement of our case. He assured us that the political rights and interests of the Muslim community would be safeguarded in any change in administration that might occur. Our principle was accepted. Most of our demands in detail were conceded, though not all. It would in my view have been better had there been provision for two Indian Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council—one Muslim and one Hindu—instead of the one finally provided for. . . .

10. Sir Reginald Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem in India*, p. 34.

'Our achievement in 1906 seemed important enough; and it was obvious to those of us most closely associated with it—especially Nawab Mohsen-ul-Mulk and myself—that, since we had obtained separate electoral recognition, we must have the political organization to make the separate representation effective. The All India Muslim League was therefore founded at a meeting at Dacca later that year at which, as it happened, I was unable to be present. I was however elected its first President, and as such I remained until 1912.'[11]

The only Muslim of any consequence who opposed the principle of separate electorate was Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who held that the principle was dividing the nation against itself, and for nearly quarter of a century he remained the most inflexible critic and opponent of this approach.

In her *India, Minto and Morley*, Lady Minto quotes a letter she received from an official describing the Viceroy's response to the Muslim Deputation as 'nothing less than the pulling back of sixty-two millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition.'[12] Now that Minto Papers have been thrown open to the public there is no evidence to suggest that the Deputation was in any sense engineered, as has been alleged so far by the Congress apologists. The plain fact is that the Deputation was organised by Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk and its stand was perfectly consistent with the one taken by Syed Ahmad Khan who as early as 1883 had declared that 'election pure and simple' was quite unsuited to diversified India where the 'rigour of religious institutions has kept even neighbours apart.'[13]

Mohamed Ali's views on the Simla Deputation were expressed some seventeen years after the event when he was President of the Indian National Congress. He was merely toeing the official line and not making any sensational disclosure, based on first-hand information, when he said: 'To follow the fashion of British journalists during the War, "there is no harm *now* in saying" that the

11. Aga Khan, *The Memoirs* (London, 1954), pp. 92-95.
12. Ibid., p. 34.
13. See Sir Reginald Coupland, op. cit., Appendix II, p. 155.

Deputation's was a "command" performance.'[14]

Meanwhile Mohamed Ali, who watched with approval the partition of Bengal and the outcome of the Deputation's meeting with Lord Minto, succeeded in persuading the Gaekwad of Baroda to allow him freedom to pursue his interest in politics and journalism which constantly tempted him. He became one of the founders of the Muslim League and attended the Session at Dacca, giving it shape and 'telling Muslim India, through the mouth of Sir Salimullah, the then Nawab Bahadur of Dacca, how it could maintain its identity in the country and yet take the fullest part in the Indian struggle for freedom. Since then his connexion with the Muslim League remained constant until death.'[15] It is significant that when some amendments were moved to the first resolution sponsored by Sir Salimullah spelling out the objects of the Muslim League, it was not the Nawab of Dacca but young Mohamed Ali who provided the necessary clarifications as a result of which the amendments were withdrawn and the resolution was passed unanimously.

Mohamed Ali made a contribution to the founding session of the Muslim League. At the suggestion of Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Vaqar-ul-Mulk, he wrote an account of this historic event in a pamphlet entitled *Proceedings of Dacca Session of All-India Muslim League, 1906*.[16]

The slogan of the Muslim League was defence, not defiance; the accent was on loyalty, not sedition; the emphasis was on education, not agitation.

After attending the Muslim League Session Mohamed Ali took three months' leave from the Gaekwad of Baroda. During this period he made a short tour in the United Provinces, and on 15 and 16 February he delivered two lectures at Allahabad on 'The Present Political Situation,' and 'The Muhammadan Pro-

14. *Writings and Speeches*, pp. 254-55.

15. Ibid., Foreword by Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, p. xx.

16. Published at Lucknow in 1907. Reprinted for National Archives of Pakistan, Karachi, 1969.

gramme'. 'The object of these lectures was to arouse interest in the Muslim League which had just been formed. He advised his co-religionists to work for unity, but not to join the Congress. He would never advocate the cause of any association likely to disintegrate the people, he said. The Muslim League was not an effort at disintegration but at integration. He compared the Congress of the Hindus and the League of the Mussalmans to two trees growing on either side of the road. Their trunks stood apart, but their roots were fixed in the same soil, drawing nourishment from the same source. The branches were bound to meet when the stems had reached their full stature, and shade the passersby. The soil was British, the nutriment was a common patriotism, the trunks were the two political bodies and the road was the highway of peaceful progress.'[17]

Before 1900 the only other world which really impinged upon India as a whole was England. The first break in this vision of supremacy came with the triumph of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. The effect was all the greater because Japan had accepted the West later than India; and Russia was thought to be the greatest European power after Britain. Japan was now the ally of Britain. If she could be a great power, why not India?[18]

Mohamed Ali, an independent observer of the scene, who was not a civil servant of the British, and hardly even a British subject, watched these developments from a position of vantage. Despite the protestations of the Congress and the League, he saw hardly any active loyalty in India. On the other hand, he thought that discontent was universal. Political unrest was the direct consequence of English education. What was good for Britain could not be bad for India. The Muslims were happy after their success with Lord Minto and the founding of the Muslim League, but the community had its own grievances, its own aspirations and certainly wanted room for expansion.

17. F.H. Vincent, 'History Sheet of Mohamed Ali.'
18. *The Oxford History*, p. 318.

The class from which the Indian Congress sprang was described by Lord Dufferin in 1888 as a 'microscopic minority'.[19] The statement was statistically correct but in the first decade of the twentieth century, when political discontent was shared by the vast mass of the Hindu community, it was a facile assumption. Mohamed Ali could clearly see that there was no real difference between the Extremists and the Moderates in the Congress; they were chips of the same block. There was a slight difference of accent between Gokhale and Tilak and Pal. The Moderates were not so far removed from the Extremists as to be considered distinct in kind. Didn't the Moderates:

> Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
> And without sneering teach the rest to sneer;
> Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
> Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike?

Mohamed Ali saw that the Europeans were not without their Gokhales and their Pals either. There was an extremist section among the British civil servants who considered every concession a sign of weakness incompatible with the glory of the imperial rulers. Trusting none, they were trusted by nobody. And yet these repressionists were not disowned by the Moderate school exactly as the Congress Extremists were not repudiated by Gokhale. The choice between British bigotry and Indian prejudice was indeed hard for any independent observer.

'Are young nations that learn their political lessons from older nations ever grateful?' asked Mohamed Ali. 'Japan stands to-day as a living example of ingratitude. . . . England,' he advised, 'must now cheerfully pay the penalty of her generous impulses.'[20] But the British ruler continued to insist that what was sauce for the goose was not sauce for the gander. The white man's faith in his right to rule had neither relented nor relaxed. The thoughtless and overbearing conduct of the British administration coupled with their passive tolerance of injustice to the local population

19. Ibid., p. 294.

20. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 11.

was the major cause of discontent. The Englishman in India remained out of touch and out of sympathy with the millions he ruled. 'The intoxication born of the heady wine of power and pride would go,' warned Mohamad Ali, 'leaving as a poor successor the nausea and the torpor of tardy regrets.'[21]

Mohamed Ali summed up the causes of discontent in contemporary India :

'. . . the present discontent is due partly, and inevitably, to the advance of Western education and enlightenment, aggravated by the blunders of the educationalists, and extended and amplified by the active support of the Congress Extremists, and the contributory negligence of the Moderates. . . . An additional impetus is also given by the lavish promises of the English and their tardy performance. These pledges were not given by Machiavellian politicians as the [Congress] Extremists would have us believe, but were the outcome of those generous impulses which a free people are bound to feel from time to time. . . . In fact, hardly any Indian patriot has renderd India such valuable services as . . . Burke and Bright, Macaulay and Bentinck. But all cannot take the wings of angels. Because the average Englishman lacks the fluffy growth on his shoulder blades, is it any reason to credit him with the cloven foot?'[22]

Mohamed Ali pleads with the Englishman to shed his insularity and hypocrisy; 'living in the midst of people, yet he was avoiding the touch of a sixth of the whole human race.'[23]

This folly, he foresaw, would lead to a tragic end. Mohamed Ali, as was his wont, wrote out his 'Thoughts on the Present Discontent,' in response to an overpowering impulse one night in Baroda when sleep was almost impossible owing to a great storm that heralded the break of monsoon. These articles were contributed to the *Times of India* and the *Indian Spectator* and were later published in the form of a brochure. 'The book created almost a sensation and the Opium Commissioner of Mehsana and the Naib-Subah of Navsari [in Baroda] gained fame as

21. Ibid., p. 18. 22. Ibid., p. 21. 23. Ibid., p. 22.

perhaps the foremost exponent of India and Muslim political thought.'[24]

The success sustained him in the drudgery of his work in Baroda. He stayed on, not because he loved the job, but because the Gaekwad was kind to him and allowed him freedom to pursue his interests in journalism and politics. His son and heir apparent, Prince Fateh Singh, was a dear friend of Mohamed Ali from Oxford, and his ready and genial help made life bearable.

Mohamed Ali was on three months' leave of absence from Baroda (January-March 1907). During this period a significant event took place in Aligarh College. This is what an eye-witness, Mir Wilayat Husain, who was teaching in Aligarh at this time, wrote :

'In February 1907, on the occasion of Aligarh Exhibition a policeman on duty stopped a college student, Raja Ghulam Husain, from approaching the exhibits. Ghulam Husain had a stick in his hand which he used at the constable. The policemen offered resistance. The other college students who were present in the exhibition came to the rescue of Ghulam Husain. There was a clash. The officers intervened and the incident was over.

'Syed Abu Muhammad filed a written complaint against Raja Ghulam Husain to the Principal, Mr Archibold. Students are often rowdy and do not carry out anyone's orders. The Principal sent the letter to me. I was of the view that Ghulam Husain was to blame for the incident and recommended that he should be punished. The Principal imposed a fine of rupees twenty on Ghulam Husain who was forbidden to leave the hostel for a few days. The students took an exception to this penalty. Every student contributed a paisa each and the sum representing the fine in the form of paisa coins was placed on the table of the Principal. . . . He expelled him from the Boarding House. This order of expulsion led to agitation. The students gathered in the lawn. Mr Brown did not come. He and I and Master Mazhar Aleem went to the Boarding House. When we neared the gathering the students raised slogans "Don't come here". Mr Brown allowed five minutes to the students to disperse. He kept looking at the watch ; the stipulated time expired but the students did not budge an inch. The agitation continued until midnight and then the gather-

24. Ibid., Foreword by Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, p. xix.

ing dispersed. The next day (like 1887 when a minor strike took place), a few students were named as ring leaders who were expelled by the Principal from the Boarding House. But on this occasion the students took possession of the college and the Boarding House and said that the college was theirs and there was no reason why they should go out. At last the Dining Hall and the college were closed down for some time.'[25]

Things were happening in Aligarh in February 1907. Gokhale, the Congress leader, delivered three lectures in the Lyall Library Hall in Aligarh during this month. The College authorities forbade the students to listen to Gokhale but of course they went. Mohamed Ali, who was touring the United Provinces during his leave and was lecturing on the Muslim League and its programme, persuaded the Secretary of the College to invite Gokhale to give a speech on education. The Principal did not like it. Earlier an old boy of the College, Hasrat Mohani, had attracted the attention of the Indian Penal Code for an article contributed to his journal, *Urdu-i-Mualla*, by a student of the Aligarh College criticising the British Government for their policy in Egypt. Mohamed Ali's presence at this time in Aligarh was certainly not welcome to the Principal who declared the College out of bounds for him. Mohamed Ali treated the order with contempt. There was an unpleasant exchange between him and the Principal when the latter saw him near the College Mosque. 'Do you know, Mohamed Ali, that the College is out of bounds for you?' rebuked Principal Archibold. Mohamed Ali gently replied : 'The College is my own; who are you to impose any ban on my entry, specially when I am standing at the door of God's House?' Archibold merely muttered, 'Oh! I never knew you are another edition of Hasrat. But remember, Mohamed Ali,' he warned, 'it would take me only ten days to go back to England.' The Principal had hoped to impress Mohamed Ali, who dearly loved his College, that he should not be driven to abandon the College. Mohamed Ali replied, 'But you

25. Mir Wilayat Husain, 'Zati Diary ke Chand Waraq,' *Aligarh Magazine*, 'Special Aligarh Number,' 1953, pp. 54-55.

forget, Mr. Archibold, that it would take precisely the same period for another Englishman to come out to India on the same salary.'[26]

An inquiry committee was set up under Mr Justice Muhammad Rafiq, an old boy of the College. On its recommendation one of the English staff was dismissed from service. The committee, before which Mohamed Ali appeared as a witness, held that his own articles were a contributory cause of the discontent that expressed itself in the defiance of the students at Aligarh.

Before returning to Baroda, Mohamed Ali attended in Aligarh the anniversary of the death of Syed Ahmad Khan on 27 March 1907. This was a great occasion particularly as it had come so soon after the victory of the students in the strike. Mohamed Ali briefly referred to this incident in his Presidential Address to the Congress in 1924 as follows:

'. . . there occurred a strike of the students of Syed Ahmad Khan's College at Aligarh, owing to the support given against them by their own English Principal and Professors to the police that had picked up a quarrel with one of them. Just about that time fell the anniversary of Syed Ahmad Khan's death celebrated annually in the College as the "Founder's Day". For that occasion I had written in Urdu an Ode addressed to the late Founder of my College, and referring to this unmistakable indication of the students' self-respect and of their willingness to make the necessary self-sacrifice demanded by the haughty disdain of the foreigner, I had said :

سکھایا تھا تمہیں نے قوم کو یہ شور و شر سارا
جو اس کی انتہا ہم ہیں تو اس کی ابتدا تم ہو

(It is you that had taught the community all this "mischief"; if we are its culmination, you are its commencement).'[27]

This was, however, only a beginning and a modest one at that. Mohamed Ali did not entirely share the views of Syed Ahmad

26. Allah Bakhsh Yusufi, *The Life of Maulana Mohamed Ali Jauhar*, pp. 71-72.

27. *Writings and Speeches*, pp. 252-53.

Khan. While the Muslim community followed his political lead without a murmur, Aligarh was the *bete noir* of the pious Muslims who violently disagreed with Syed Ahmad Khan's over-zealous interpretation of the Quran to reconcile it with what were considered the principles of Science. Mohamed Ali never identified himself with Syed Ahmad's religious views. He conceded that in politics, a true instinct guided Syed Ahmad Khan a generation previously in opposing the yoking together of the strong and the weak, the Hindus and the Muslims. He believed, however, that Syed Ahmad Khan was not opposed to Muslim participation in politics for all time, but that they had to wait until, through forced marches, they could make up for the lost time and compete with Hindus at an equal level.[28]

LET us leave the Indian scene for a while and have a brief look at Turkey, the only country in the fortunes of which Indian Muslims continued to take keen interest. By 1908 there was much to encourage national stirrings in Turkey among those whose aim was the restoration of constitutional rule of the Parliament which had been suspended and prorogued since 1878.

In the Far East, an Oriental but constitutional Japan had, a few years previously, defeated a European but autocratic Russia, and both Russia and Persia had accepted this demonstration of the superiority of democratic institutions, and had introduced, the one by precaution, the other by revolution, constitutional and parliamentary regimes. In Europe the meeting of the English and Russian sovereigns at Reval (on 9-10 June 1908) seemed to portend the obsequies of the 'sick man of Europe,' and suggested an urgent need for the constitutional nostrum. And in the Turkish Empire, a wave of mutinies or rather strikes was spreading as Abdul Hamid's unpaid, underfed and ragged soldiery rose in desperation to demand the satisfaction of a few basic needs.

The Young Turks possessed no power to depose the Khalifah.

28. Ibid., p. 251.

This was traditionally the prerogative of the Ulema. Two possibilities remained: to convince Abdul Hamid that he should restore the Constitution or to launch a massive campaign to win over the mass of the people. A convention was arranged in 1907. There was unanimity for the deposition of Abdul Hamid and the restoration of the Constitution. The conference served only to clarify the future line of action because the delegates had no power to enforce any resolutions.

It was the Society of Union and Progress, one of the revolutionary groups in Turkey, that forced Abdul Hamid to capitulate on 21 July 1908, and in consequence it became the most important political party in the country.

A debate ensued: Are we Turks or are we Muslims? Most of them were both. But the question whether the Muslim community or the Turkish nation was to be the basis of identity and focus of loyalty was most hotly debated at the time. Much could depend on the answer to the social and cultural policies of the State, its international friendships and alignments, even, it might be, its territorial limits.

To what civilisation did the Turks belong—and in what civilisation did their future lie? For the past millennium the Turkish peoples had formed a part—for long the dominant part—of the community of Islam, and their whole culture—religion and politics, law and art, society and government, language and script—was all shaped in Islamic moulds. For the past century they had been imitating the West, in an attempt—mainly unsuccessful—to save the Empire from collapse and win the respect of Europe by conforming to European patterns of culture and organisation. With all its failures and disappointments, however, the movement of Westernism was continuing, and the Turkish people had come to a crisis of civilisation—a turning-point in their history comparable, in its way, with that remote and half-forgotten time when their Central Asian ancestors had hesitated between China and Islam, and then, too, had chosen the Western alternative.

In the writings of the Young Turks one comes across many

solutions. The more important were the Moderate Islamists. Most of them, even with some Western education, saw the need for some measure of reform in their religious ideas, and sought desperately for ways of achieving it, without endangering the religious and cultural heritage of Islam or the unity of the Islamic world. In their insistence on Pan-Islamic unity, their anxious insistence that Islam is not an obstacle to modern civilisation, that it is indeed the source and origin of European culture, they were strongly reminiscent of the apologetic and romantic writers of nineteenth-century Muslim India, by whom they were influenced to no small extent.

The fallacy that everything seen in Europe can be imitated here (says Ismail Hami, apparently following Moltke) has become 'a political tradition among us. For example—by simultaneously introducing Russian uniforms, Belgian rifles, Turkish headgear, Hungarian saddles, English swords, and French drill—we have created an army that is a grotesque parody of Europe.'

But for the extreme Westernisers, the remedy was not less, but more Westernisation. The trouble with the earlier reforms, they said, was that they had not gone far enough. Westernisation was not a matter of choice but of survival.

The two aspirations of union and progress were introduced first by Namik Kemal. Union meant the co-operation of all nationalists within the Ottoman Empire. Progress implied the bringing about of a social revolution through educational and economic measures. With the coming of the 1908 Revolution something made itself felt for the first time: the Turkish masses reacted politically rather than religiously. The Turk who felt himself to be nothing but a Muslim and a member of a Muslim State was now on the horns of a dilemma. The more the State lost its traditional features, that is, the more the religious and political features of the State became separated and the more the State was portrayed as a political association of the *millets*, the more the members of the *ummet* of the Turks found themselves in a vacuum. The *ummet* ceased to exist in a real sense; the term became an empty word

while the Turks were an aggregate which did not even have a name for national and cultural self-identification.[29]

The Society of Union and Progress established itself spontaneously as a national organisation. It became the basis of the emergent Turkish nation. The most influential leaders of the Society were from the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire rather than from Anatolia, and were uprooted Turks, or Turks who had broken with tradition through education, or non-Turkish Muslims who had been Turkified by modern education. Army officers, doctors and teachers were prominent among them.

By Hamidian standards, they were all *dehrias* (atheists) in their politico-religious views; they were firm believers in progress. Their mental make-up contrasted sharply with those of the Anatolian traditionalists and the political *elite* of Muslim India in particular.

WHILE far-reaching events were taking place in Japan, China, Persia and Turkey, India was slowly crawling to the threshold of representative Government. The Morley-Minto reforms were the first tentative steps in this direction.

The Act of 1909 brought further the advance begun by the Act of 1892. But the Legislative Council was still regarded as a Darbar rather than as Parliament; and in 1909 no less than in 1892, both the authors of the measures of advance and their critics, liberals as well as conservatives, declared as categorically as Macaulay in 1833 that India was not qualified for a parliamentary system.

The Congress and the League both welcomed the Constitution of 1909. The politicians were now free to criticise the executive, but they could not control it. The officials, still mostly British, often took some action under the pressure of majority resolutions but often is not always and influence is not government. Even this Constitution was to work without any serious difficulty for a whole decade.

29. Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 327.

Mohamed Ali, still a civil servant in Baroda, was plainly pleased at this advance. In a letter to Col. Dunlop Smith, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, he explains why the Muslim League at its Annual Session in Amritsar, which Mohamed Ali attended, could not pass a warmer resolution of thanks to the Viceroy:

'We wished to be more generous and emphatic in the resolution of thanks . . . but our Punjab friends could not curb their antipathies in their relations with their Hindu fellow-countrymen to approve of a more generous recognition of the wise and great reforms and the politic provisos which save them from being abused.'

He warned, however, that 'Lord Morley had failed signally to provide proper and effective safeguards against the majority nominating its own ticket holders for the minority.' He pointed out to the Viceroy's Private Secretary the 'fallacy which provided for the election of "*members*" of our community when we asked for provision for the election of our *representatives*.'[30]

Mohamed Ali, while agreeing with the principle of separate electorates, which he considered necessary at that time, advocated the progressive creation of mixed electorates, gradually to replace them. He opposed Syed Amir Ali who did not wish to risk any seat by agreeing to the retention of some mixed electorates, and wanted safe, even if fewer, seats for the Muslims.[31] Mohamed Ali advocated that as inter-communal relations improved, the number of separate seats should be decreased till all came to be contested in mixed territorial electorates. He advocated the same policy in throwing administrative posts open from communal to general competition.

The Muslim League was barely two years old when the Congress in 1908, in the first definite formulation of its political goal, set out to achieve for India a position identical with that enjoyed by Canada and other self-governing colonies. The Aga Khan was

30. Letter dated 7 January 1909 published in *Dawn*, Karachi, by Dr S.R. Wasti who came across it in National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

31. *Writings and Speeches*, pp. 301-02.

an absentee President, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, the successor of Syed Ahmad and the moving spirit behind the new organisation, died soon after it was founded. The leadership was in the hands of Nawabs and feudal lords and there were no young Turks on the horizon. Among the young Muslim leaders who attended the inaugural session in Dacca, Mohamed Ali was a civil servant in the Baroda State, Fazl-i-Husain was an able barrister in the Punjab, Zafar Ali Khan, an old boy of Aligarh, had yet to find his moorings, and A.K. Fazl-ul-Haq from Bengal was far from being a 'tiger'. The organisation had a restricted, limited appeal. All its sessions ended with three cheers for the King Emperor.

In the First Session held at Karachi in December 1907, one could already see evidence of in-fighting by various factions. Fazl-i-Husain and Mian Muhammad Shafi had both set up their own organisations in the Punjab and both sought affiliation. During the discussions that followed Mohamed Ali supported Fazl-i-Husain, his old friend of London days, but he decided to withdraw his claim and consented to serve as Joint Secretary to the Provincial Branch of which Mian (later Justice) Shah Din was elected President and Mian Muhammad Shafi, General Secretary.[32] Among members of the Central Committee for various provinces 'Mr. Mohamed Ali, B. A. (Oxon) of Baroda' was elected to represent the group of Native States.[33]

In the Second Session held at Amritsar in December 1908, Mohamed Ali proposed a resolution which asked to appoint a Commission to inquire into the number, general purposes and manner of administration of Mussalman endowments.[34] In this session the Aga Khan was absent and so was the Secretary, Major Syed Hasan. The Assistant Secretary, Moosa Khan, had elementary knowledge of English. Mr (later Sir) Ali Imam, the President of the Session, bore the major brunt of the work. He associated Mohamed Ali

32. Azim Husain, *Fazl-i-Husain, A Political Biography* (Longmans, 1946), p. 97.

33. *Muslim League Documents*, pp. 33-34.

34. Ibid., p. 82.

with himself in drawing up the various resolutions and rescuing them from the mutilating propensities of the Subjects Committee—a role which Mohamed Ali seemed to have played in all sessions since Dacca.

In the Third Annual Session in Delhi, Mohamed Ali moved only one resolution and this related to the cause of Indians in South Africa.

In the Fourth Session held at Nagpur on 28-30 December 1910, Mohamed Ali took a more prominent part. His speech on Urdu, 'a touchstone of Hindu sincerity,' was eloquent. Even in a summary, parts of it are worth repeating :

'In a land where everything was dissimilar, races and creeds, customs and institutions, modes of thought and action, the one thing common was the lingua franca of the country, Urdu. It was its development and the enrichment of its vocabulary from all possible sources, Arabic, Sanskrit and English, which was the *sine qua non* of the Indian nationality of the future. Mussalmans have no linguistic prejudices. In Persia they preserved and developed Persian. In Turkey they preserved the language of the destroyers of the Abbasid Empire. In India they took up the language from the soil itself and made it their own. Did they bring Urdu from Arabia or Persia or Afghanistan? No, it was in the Indian camp and the market-place that they picked it up, and 80% of the words used in their daily intercourse were such as would have no meaning for an Arab or a Persian, or a Turk or an Afghan, and yet he noticed that the one province with which the Mussalmans were most intimately connected for a thousand years objected to words of Persian and Arabic origin, branding them as *bideshi* and foreign. It was as if a banker were throwing into the gutter all gold and silver that bore the stamp of Arabia or Persia. No Hindu banker would throw away pure gold and pure silver simply because the coin was minted in a *bideshi* mint, and yet the Hindus of the United Provinces and the Punjab were doing what no thrifty Hindu would do in the case of his hoarded wealth. For a community justly renowned and praised for its thrift, this was amazing.'[35]

Moving a resolution on free and compulsory primary education, Mohamed Ali, brushing aside the question of finances raised by a member, said, 'It was no use talking of hypothetical difficulties

35. Ibid., pp. 198-99.

and conjectural evils when compulsory and free education was already established in Baroda. Paucity of funds did not prevent the great ruler of Baroda from making education free. The needs and feelings of the ryots did not prevent him from making it compulsory. To talk of such difficulties is to presume that the administrators would work out the details senselessly or with sheer carelessness.

'We were told that analogies were misleading. The ruler of Baroda was an Indian and our Government foreign. He deprecated the use of that word and felt sure that a government was foreign only if it alienated the sympathies of the best of its subjects. In making education compulsory and free, Government would win the sympathy and active support of the best in the land, whereas procrastination would be fraught with grave danger. The best form of freedom,' Mohamed Ali concluded, 'is free education, and the most pleasing compulsion is compulsory education.'[36]

GIVEN a free choice Mohamed Ali would have almost certainly chosen education as a profession. From Oxford he went straight to his old College but Morrison would not have him. He would have created a flutter in the dovecots of Aligarh; and Principal Morrison, guided by the instinct of self-preservation, turned him away. At Rampur he headed the educational set-up of the State. He went too fast but before he could go too far he was made to quit. Had he succeeded in entering the Indian Civil Service, he could not have lasted long in that hide-bound fraternity. He was not cut out for the role of a faceless civil servant. Nor was he equipped to be a courtier. Sycophancy and intrigue were not the skills he had cared to cultivate. And yet for the best part of a decade he remained in Baroda.

No junior civil servant who had just started his career could emulate his example with impunity. Within a year of his arrival in Baroda Mohamed Ali presided over the Bombay Presidency

36. Ibid., p. 209.

Educational Conference. Education was a highly charged subject at that time for this was the only platform Syed Ahmad Khan would commend to his community. Again the same year he spoke at Ahmedabad on the 'proposed Muslim University' and came out with his vague but disturbing thesis about a federation of faiths. What was this young man up to? His protestations of loyalty notwithstanding, he was clearly not conforming to the code of Civil Service. And yet at Baroda he was not ignoring his job. In fact, he made such a success of it that revenues of his Department increased by 20%. He had earned such a reputation for himself that some of the neighbouring States were already asking the Gaekwad of Baroda to lend them his services.

The heir apparent, Prince Fateh Singh, who was at Oxford with Mohamed Ali and was a member of the Nauratan Club he had founded there, perhaps provides the key to the unprecedented freedom enjoyed by his friend. Mohamed Ali was indeed a charmer. An impeccable sartorial taste, an irrepressible sense of humour, an uncommon command over the English language, a fastidious taste for matching neckties with handkerchiefs, he was almost a dandy and a killer. He made friends easily and had the knack of retaining them. He was candid, frank and forthcoming. He wore his heart on his sleeve and nobody had to be on guard in his presence. He was, in short, a cultivated man who felt equally at home both in the old Oriental tradition and in the new English society. His talents endeared him to many and estranged a few.

At Baroda he adorned both the Club and the Court. At home he had a loving wife and lovely children. But somehow, something was missing somewhere. Mohamed Ali was ill at ease. His desk was not his destiny. His laughter, his jokes and his repartees were a cloak under which he was hiding some agonising pain. Smitten by some grievous sorrow he retained his gaiety, his gregarious hilarity, his sparkling wit—qualities for which he was sought after in society. Driven by some irresistible impulse he would sit up for a whole night and put his thoughts on paper—thoughts on the present discontent, for example—and then he would not even use

a pseudonym to protect the anonymity of a civil servant. He would broadcast and defend them with the vehemence and conviction of a missionary. Journalism was certainly a powerful distraction, a temptation he could scarcely resist. His success in this field plainly pleased him, but the wonder is that it did not sufficiently displease others to drive him out and deprive him of his sanctuary. After exactly five years at Baroda, Fateh Singh—a prince among men—died a young man of twenty-four. Mohamed Ali cried like a baby. It was truly a tragedy. A link had been snapped. For the first time in his life Mohamed Ali burst forth into poetry and wrote a poem in Urdu which unfortunately does not appear in his collection published a decade later.

The soul of Mohamed Ali was slowly but surely slipping away from the State Civil Service. It was too restricted a field to satisfy a restless spirit. He found some satisfaction in Dacca at the inaugural session of the Muslim League. His talent for writing good English came in handy, not only in Dacca, but in the subsequent sessions in Delhi and Amritsar. From his base in Baroda he spread the message of the Muslim League in a lecture tour of the United Provinces and paid some attention to Aligarh College. The success of the strike, the first encounter with the awesome authority of the British, was a source of some satisfaction.

It was becoming increasingly clear that nothing but further frustration would ensue from the spectrum of divided loyalty for no mortal could combine in one person the role of a civil servant who functions from behind the scenes, with the role of a journalist and the role of a politician. And so, by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the die was cast. Mohamed Ali decided to quite Baroda. He disguised his departure as two years' leave without pay and made for Calcutta, the capital of Imperial India. But while still in Baroda, he received tempting offers of higher office from two other States. He may yet have wavered and accepted them. But he firmly closed his eyes to all temptations, and hurriedly left Baroda.

He reached Calcutta on a hazy, misty morning on New Year's

Day in 1911. On arrival he received a bulky telegram pressing him to accept ministerial responsibility in yet another State. The offer was backed by no less a person than Sir Michael O'Dwyer. The temptation was great. But, like Nelson applying the telescope to the blind eye, Mohamed Ali kept the telegram unopened till his new weekly was on sale in the streets of Calcutta. Mohamed Ali wrote later :

'In 1911, I founded *The Comrade* at some personal sacrifice, as would be readily testified to by Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the present Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, who had at the time joined his personal pressure, as Agent to the Governor-General in Central India, to that of the ruler of a State included in his charge, in order to induce me to accept the lucrative post of the latter's Minister. I had frankly told both His Highness and His Honour that the particular point of view from which I looked on public affairs was extremely poorly represented at the time in the councils of our rulers, and that although the large salary that was being offered to me was a considerable inducement, and the opportunity to assist a young ruler, with all his generous enthusiasms and noble ambitions unshed, in the task of practical administration, on howsoever restricted a scale, appeared at times to appeal to me with greater force than the obviously unpracticable dreams of youth of creating a new earth and a new heaven through an organ of the Press, to me the louder call of duty came from the larger, if also less substantial, field of my early dreams. And of course Sir Michael O'Dwyer's suggestion that I could publish *The Comrade* from the capital of a Central India State did not appear to me to be at all feasible. For this very reason I had taken long leave without pay from the State of His Highness the Gaekwad, where I had already finished my novitiate in practical administration as a Baroda civil servant, lasting through a period of seven years, after a year spent at my home in Rampur State as the chief educational officer. I had bade good-bye to all administrative ambition, though a large amount of confidence in my cause and at least a modest amount of it in myself were only assets at the time, and the success of my advocacy of that cause was the only dividend to which I looked forward.'[37]

This, then, was the role which was in search of Mohamed Ali, the role which transformed into a dedicated and devoted soldier who was no longer in need of disguise and who could now in all

37. Written Statement, p. 20.

honesty issue forth the clarion call:

> Stand upright, speak thy thought, declare
> The Truth thou hast that all may share.
> Be bold, proclaim it everywhere;
> They only live who dare!

These lines aptly chosen as a motto for the *Comrade*, comrade of all and partisan of none, as Mohamed Ali put it, sum up the urges, the inner compulsions, and the quiet conflicts which he sought to resolve with the plunge in politics. The motto was perhaps more of a soliloquy than a slogan, for wasn't Mohamed Ali, in embarking upon a new hazard, steeling his own resolve to face the consequences?

Chapter Three

PLUNGE INTO POLITICS

[1911–1913]

Launching of Comrade *in Calcutta, 14 January 1911—Policy of the Paper—Delhi Darbar, 1911—Partition of Bengal Annulled, 1911—The Balkan Wars and Their Effect on India—Proposal for a Loan to Turkey and the Aga Khan's Reactions—Aga Khan's Version at Variance with Mohamed Ali's—Despatch of Medical Mission to Turkey, December 1912—Lord Hardinge's Help in Organising Relief—The British Mix Missionary Work with Relief—Defence of the Gaekwad of Baroda—Aligarh Muslim University or Aligarh University?—The Move from Calcutta to Delhi, September 1912—Participation in Muslim League Politics—Assessment of an Intelligence Officer, October 1913*

MOHAMED ALI had participated in politics before coming to Calcutta, but now he had taken a plunge making it a focal point instead of merely pursuing it as part of his manysided personality. Politics was now a passion, not a pastime. And journalism was a means, not an end. It was all very well to write occasionally for the press but to bring out a paper was another story. He had come to Calcutta without capital, without even calculating the risk he was taking. He had no credentials as a journalist and a cause alone in this competitive field was not enough to create a clientele. And yet within two weeks of his arrival the first issue of the *Comrade* was selling in the streets. It was written, edited and produced by one man; the circulars were wrapped up and pasted by a life-long friend, Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, who later, from Calcutta itself, started a paper, *The Morning News*.

Comrade was by no means the first paper which came out from Calcutta where the press had a long tradition. The first newspaper in India was the *Bengal Gazette* which appeared as far back as

1780. From that time a succession of journals appeared and a running fight for freedom of speech was waged with Government. In a nascent society which had not yet acquired the habit of sustained reading, for which books were not easily available, and which could not afford to buy many of those that were, the newspaper, particularly a weekly which contained more reading matter, performed an invaluable function in educating the reader. Not many could read English and those who did had at this time a fairly wide choice in Calcutta. The competition was fierce but Mohamed Ali counted on the *elite* of the Muslim community. For the first time a journal in English had appeared which articulated so eloquently their hopes, fears and aspirations. The success of the venture surpassed the wildest expectations of the Editor. *Comrade* was hailed as the 'new star in the firmament of Indian journalism,' and Mohamed Ali who had so timidly made his first bow to the journalistic footlights had now come right in front of them. Nothing like it, both in make-up and its contents, had appeared before. A prominent Bengali journalist wrote to congratulate the Editor:

> 'I am not one of those who hold that appearance is not reality. Only a popular journal can afford to come out in rags. On the other hand, a paper which has no pretensions to popularity, and whose sole object is to serve the interests of a community should avoid the risk of being described as a rag. That is what you did and so successfully that the most ancient journal in Calcutta, *The Hindu Patriot*, by imitating you has undergone a strange transformation. The first lesson you have taught the Bengali journalists is that it is the clothes that make all the difference in the world.'[1]

In this case it was true both of the Editor and the journal.

From the first edition of 250, *Comrade* quickly rose in circulation, stature, and influence. The policy of the paper was spelled out in the first issue which came out on 14 January 1911. Mohamed Ali wrote :

1. *Comrade* (1912), quoted in Allah Bakhsh Yusufi, *Life of Maulana Mohamed Ali Jauhar*.

'We have no faith in the cry that India is united. . . . The bare imagination of a feast will not dull the edge of hunger. We have less faith still in the sanctimoniousness that transmutes in its subtle alchemy a rapacious monopoly into fervent patriotism.

> Even as poor bride deceiv'd with painted grapes
> Do surfeit by the eye, and pine the maw.

Those of us who cannot distinguish true gold from the glitter of spurious coins, will one day surfeit by the ear and pine the heart. But the person we love best, fear the most, and trust the least is the impatient idealist. Goethe said of Byron that he was a prodigious poet, but that when he reflected he was a child. Well, we think no better and no worse of the man who combines great ideals and a greater impatience. So many efforts, well-meaning as well as ill-begotten, have failed in bringing unity to this distracted land, that we cannot spare even cheap and scentless flowers of sentiment for the grave of another ill-judged endeavour. We shall not make the mistake of gumming together pieces of broken glass, and then cry over the unsuccessful result, or blame the refractory material. In other words, we shall endeavour to face the situation boldly, and respect facts, facts, howsoever ugly and ill-favoured. It is poor statesmanship to slur over inconvenient realities, and not the least important success in achieving unity is the honest and frank recognition of deep-seated prejudices that hinder it and the yawning differences that divide.

'But while providing for to-day, we must not forget the morrow. It is our firm belief that if the Muslims or the Hindus attempt to achieve success in opposition to or even without the co-operation of one another, they will not only fail, but fail ignominiously. But every step has to be taken with caution. Nothing in history, ancient or modern, provides a useful analogy to the condition of modern India. History never repeats itself. But it is still the best educative force for mankind, and it has its lessons for us also. The problems of India are almost international. But when the statesmen and philanthropists of Europe, with all its wars of interests and national jealousies, do not despair of abolishing war and placing Pax on the throne of Bellona, shall we despair of Indian nationality? We may not create to-day the patriotic fervour and fine national frenzy of Japan with its forty millions of homogeneous people. But a concordat like that of Canada is not beyond the bounds of practicability. It may not be a love-marriage, born of romance and poetry. But a *mariage de convenance*, honourably contracted and honourably maintained, is not to be despised. Let us begin with honest prose, and the Muses will not forbid the banns. Even this is no easy task. But it is one worthy of the sons and daughters of India, and deserves their toil and self-sacrifice.

O Unity!

> 'Thou wilt come, join men, knit nation unto nation;
> But not for us who watch to-day and burn.
> Thou wilt come; but after what long years of trial,
> Weary watching, patient longing, dull denial!'[2]

Mohamed Ali later described the dreams which led him to the *Comrade*:

'The reason which so irresistibly impelled me to take up journalism was that the affairs of my community just at that juncture made it the only avenue through which I could hope to reach a place in which I could prove of any appreciable use to it, while still earning a livelihood. But even now it was not a *religious* call that dictated this sudden, and as it proved, momentous change from the career in which I had comfortably settled down. It was more the secular affairs of my community that seemed to require this alteration in my plans. A great controversy which had gone on throughout the Morley-Minto *Regime* with regard to the claims of the Indian Musalmans to be represented as a *community* in the Legislatures and the local bodies of the country had just then culminated in the Reforms which recognised and to a great extent satisfied this claim. In this controversy I had taken my full share, and I felt that I should now assist my community in taking its proper share in the political life of the country. I was particularly anxious to help it to understand that, while endeavouring to satisfy the pressing needs of the present which may inevitably bring it now and then into conflict with other elements in the body politic, it should never lose sight of the prospects of the future when ultimately all communal interests had to be adjusted in order to harmonise with the paramount interests of India.'[3]

Mohamed Ali, writing during his days of detention in 1919, recalls:

'Although I had some ambition to lead as well as represent my people, I did not feel myself qualified for that more responsible and onerous work, and merely contented myself with undertaking the duty of acting as the spokesman of my people. This it was that induced me to address my appeal in the first instance to the British Nation and the Government, both here and in Great Britain, and I, therefore, selected the alien tongue of the British as the medium for the communication of our ideas. Every out-

2. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 257.
3. *My Life : A Fragment*, pp. 34-35.

ward device, such as expensive paper and good printing, which I could ill afford, was used, and matter followed form in its desire to attract English readers by the insertion of verse as well as short stories, and I tried my 'prentice hand at the pleasing task of caricaturing public speakers in parliamentary debate which "Toby M.P." of *Punch* had made all his own. I succeeded in attracting considerable attention among the European officials in India, many of whom became subscribers of *The Comrade*. But its outward attractions and payment to outside contributors on a lavish scale had compelled me to fix the rate of subscription rather high for a weekly review in India, and naturally this limited its circulation in so notoriously poor a country. Financial assistance was offered to me by a few of the most distinguished public men; but for the most part it was utilised to reduce the rate of subscription in the case of young men still in *statu pupillari*. The needs of advocacy, however, were greater than those of forming public opinion and I spent less in this way than I did in supplying the paper free of cost to vast numbers of men in authority in India and men wielding power or influence in Great Britain.'[4]

Brevity was not one of Mohamed Ali's faults. His lengthy editorials which seem so much to exasperate a reader today were eagerly devoured at Aligarh where the students got their money's worth in stimulating reading material which lasted them a whole week. They were grateful for it. The bureaucracy, however, did not quite appreciate the length, for the time consumed in reading editorials was not commensurate with results obtained. They enjoyed the humour and the wit and watched the Editor like a hawk, but Mohamed Ali steered clear of the press laws, at least for a while.

The *Comrade* is a mirror to the growth of Muslim opinion. In January 1911, Lord Hardinge was hardly three months old as the Viceroy of India. His regime marked something of a honeymoon between British and Indian liberals. He maintained private contacts with political leaders, particularly with Gokhale. A sort of unavowed *entente* grew up between the Congress and the Government who were more nearly in accord than at any time since 1888.[5]

4. Written Statement, p. 21.
5. *The Oxford History*, p. 333.

This was ominous for the Muslims.

The peak of British authority was perhaps marked by the Delhi Darbar of 1911 where the new King George V, King Emperor of India, and his consort held a Coronation Darbar. The occasion was marked by three significant acts, raising Bengal to the status of a Governor's province, the annulment of the partition of Bengal and the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. The Congress agitation had succeeded in undoing the partition within a brief period of six years. It represented a concession to agitation, to lung power. It took Muslim loyalty for granted. It was more plausibly said that bombs bred boons. There was hardly a British civil servant in India who had not publicly reiterated, since Curzon's Viceroyalty, that the partition was a settled fact. And yet it was annulled at a stroke in a proclamation from the Sovereign in the Delhi Darbar. Mohamed Ali advised the Muslims of India to accept the decision of the Government. He later commented :

> 'The Muslims of Eastern Bengal had been made to fight the battle of their rulers, against their neighbours, and now that it was no longer convenient for the rulers to continue the fight, they had made their own peace with all convenient speed, and had left the Muslims to the mercy of those against whom they had been used as auxiliaries. It would be hard to discover in history a more ignoble instance of betrayal in which "loyalty" has been rewarded with deprivation of recently recovered rights, and "contentment" has been punished as the worst of crimes.'[6]

Immediately after the announcement he drove over to interview Sir Charles Bayley, the head of the Local Government. There he met Lord Sinha and Sir Benode Mitter who asked him what he thought of the announcement. He told them that in the case of the Hindus of Bengal the announcement had been a matter of 'give-and-take,' that for 'sturdy loyal' Biharis it had been one of 'take' only, but that for the Muslims of Eastern Bengal it had been one of nothing but 'give,' and as a reward for their loyalty and contentment they had been given a generous helping of humble pie.

6. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 262.

And then he walked off with the mumbled prayer that they might be spared too acute an attack of indigestion!

The emancipated slaves were once more sold into bondage, and who does not know that revenge is sweet? Their old masters used the lash and the bastinado a little too lavishly.[7]

The suggestion to set aside partition originated with Crewe, Secretary of State for India. Hardinge's initial reaction was one of indifference, but later it was brought home to the Viceroy that partition would not be conducive to peace in Bengal. 'I appreciated the fact,' says Hardinge, 'that if nothing were done, we would have to be prepared for even more serious trouble in the future than in the past.'[8]

The Hindu campaign of terrorism had clearly paid off.

Mohamed Ali proposed a resolution by which the All-India Muslim League placed on record its deep sense of regret and disappointment at the annulment of the partition of Bengal in utter disregard of Muslim feeling, and expressed the hope that Government would take early steps to safeguard Muslim interests in the Presidency of Bengal.[9]

THE Muslims felt themselves betrayed both at home and abroad. The year 1911 proved indeed fateful for the Muslim world. The new Governments of Turkey, Persia and Morocco were facing storms, and the attitude of England towards the enemies of these Muslim countries had begun to alienate the sympathies of Indian Muslims. The extension of the French protectorate over Morocco with the connivance of Britain, the British inaction in the face of Italian occupation of Libya, the brigandage of Italy as it was called, the Anglo-Russian secret deals to divide Persia and possibly Turkey inspired much suspicion and more resentment in India. A delegate to the 1911 Union and Progress Convention said:

7. Ibid., p. 262.

8. Hardinge of Penhurst, *My Indian Years* (London, Murrary, 1948), p. 36.

9. *Muslim League Documents*, p. 250.

'Under the circumstances, it is evident that Ottoman Society stands . . . as a freak of nature. What will be the fate of Turks in this monstruous situation? What will be his lot if the Ottoman State loses its independence?'[10]

The Tripolitanian War was a disaster and more calamities were in store for Turkey. While Muslims in India had pinned hopes on Turkey, it seemed there was little realisation either of the weakness or of the strength of the cause which they were espousing. During the disastrous Balkan Wars, the Sheikh-ul-Islam had issued a circular to all the Turkish Schools ordering each child to repeat an Arabic prayer four thousand four hundred and forty-four times that God may help the Turkish soldiers. The shock of the Balkan defeat was intense. The Bulgar, the Serb, the Greek, Turkey's subjects for five centuries, had inflicted an ignominious defeat on it. This reality, the Muslims in Turkey and their brothers in India could not conjure up even in their imagination. Mohamed Ali tried to run away from this reality by attempting to commit suicide. This is how he describes the deep agony and disappointment of this defeat:

'My feelings during the disastrous war in the Balkans were at one time so overpowering that I must confess I even contemplated suicide. Paradoxical as it no doubt appears, even that act of moral cowardice needs some courage and I very often wonder whether I could have mustered enough of it to take the final plunge on that fateful night. The latest message of Reuter that had reached me was that the Bulgarians were only 25 miles from the walls of Constantinople— . . . a name that had for five centuries been sacred to every Muslim as the centre of his highest hopes. . . . To return to that autumn night in 1912, I was saved a trial of my courage as well as cowardice by the unexpected appearance of a Muslim friend who had graduated from Oxford not long before and was on this occasion accompanied by an English fellow-graduate of that University who was his guest and had expressed a desire to see an Indian *Nautch*. Arrangements had been made *sub rosa* and the place selected was the house of a barrister who was my next-door neighbour. My friend insisted on my company, and hard as I pleaded the excuse of a busy Editor and still harder the state of my feel-

10. Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 335.

ings after that last message of Reuter, my friend would not take any denial and almost bodily lifted me from the Editorial sanctum and carried me by main force to the private *Nautch* party next door. Thus it was that instead of being a horror of broken bones and bleeding body supposed to have accidentally fallen down from a third storey, there I was "assisting" at the "orgy" that had been arranged by my young friend to gratify the curiosity of a brother Oxonian.'[11]

In this hour of frustration Mohamed Ali turned to Aligarh. He telegraphed a desperate appeal to the students: 'Bulgarians within 24 miles of Constantinople. For God's sake collect one crore rupee for the ransom of Islam.' The *Comrade* issued an appeal to the public and contributions came pouring in from the readers. The students of Aligarh gave up their weekly dish of *pilau*, *zarda* and *firni*. The money which successful candidates would have normally spent on dinner parties to their friends after their examinations was contributed to the Comrade Turkish Relief Fund. The students going home for summer vacation travelled third instead of a higher class and contributed the balance to the Fund. Women parted with their ornaments. One poor mother contributed her baby child who was actually auctioned in Peshawar; the highest bidder gave the money to the Fund, restored the child to the mother and gave her an allowance for his unkeep. The number of such cases was legion. The response was stunning and spontaneous. The mass of the Indian Muslims were worked up to a pitch of emotion and frenzy. Turkey's defeat was the defeat of Islam; its humiliation, the shame of every Muslim. Having tasted the bitter fruit of slavery in India they were now determined that the premier Muslim State of the day would not be deprived of its freedom. And yet the leaders who were appealing in the name of Islam—Abul Kalam Azad in *Al-Hilal*, Mohamed Ali in *Comrade*, and Zafar Ali Khan in *Zamindar*—had not done enough to educate public opinion about the aims and objectives of the Young Turks who did not look upon their own movement as the spearhead of Islam.

11. *My Life : A Fragment*, pp. 37-38.

Earlier in 1911, the Aga Khan, with the assistance of Maulana Shaukat Ali, had collected three million rupees for the University of Aligarh. The money was lying idle in the Capital Fund of the University whose Charter was still being negotiated. It was invested in Government securities. Mohamed Ali suggested that the sum should be transferred to the Turkish Government. The Government of India had no objection and the Ottoman Government welcomed the move, but nothing tangible came out of it. The Aga Khan, who did not favour the proposal for a loan, recalls the climate of the controversy in his *Memoirs*:

'An organization had been set up, representing all branches of Muslim opinion in India, including many of those most closely concerned with Aligarh, whose purpose was to render all possible assistance to Turkey, and to bring maximum pressure to bear on the British Government in order that Britain's influence should be exerted in the Concert of Europe, to make defeat tolerable and honourable for the Turks. A practical gesture of help had been made in the equipment and despatch to the war area of a Red Crescent medical mission, led by Dr. Ansari—one of India's outstanding medical practitioners. This was the kind of worthwhile, humane work which I was happy to support. I contributed too to Turkey's war loans; but I found myself involved in a distressing difference of opinion with the majority of my Muslim brethren in India over our attitude to this conflict—difference of opinion which, I am sorry to say, disrupted for some time to come the hitherto close and intimate associations, in thought and action, which had subsisted between myself and other Muslim leaders in India.

'We were giving as much aid as we could to Turkey, but how much, in fact, did it amount to? The honest answer was: very little. We were not, of course, our own masters; and our real influence on British policy towards the whole Turco-Balkan issue was negligible. The Government lent a courteous if distant ear to our earnest supplications, but they could well afford to pay no practical attention to us. British opinion in general about the Ottoman Empire—"the Sick Man of Europe," as portrayed by the political cartoonists of *Punch* and other papers—was at best lukewarm. The European political situation was tense and precarious. Britain's friends in the Concert of Europe, France, Russia, and to a lesser extent Italy, were anything but pro-Turkish, and the main concern of all of them was to avoid an open breach with Germany and Austria. A delicate but chilly policy of non-intervention was

the furthest that Britain was willing to go. But the general run of Muslim opinion in India was far more fiery; the honour and integrity of Islam were at stake; and we should urge the Turks to hold on, to face every risk and accept every sacrifice, and to carry the war on to the utmost end.

'Fine sentiments, but I demurred from them. I pointed out that it was not really in our power to help the Turks; great and generous as our emotions doubtless were, we were quite incapable at that time of turning our feelings into action. To call on the Turks to stand, fight, and die for the cause of Islam, to the last piastre and the last Turk, while we survived, was unfair and unjust to the Turks. Far from helping them, it was actually worsening their plight.

'I did not mince my words. I gave an interview along these lines to the *Times of India*, the most widely-read and most responsible newspaper in the subcontinent. I observed that it was all very well sending heartening telegrams to the Turks "Go on, fight on! Do not accept defeat, whatever the sacrifice!" but that we who had sent the telegram could then go home and sleep soundly in our peaceful beds. These were not popular comments, and they evoked a storm of protest from Muslims all over India. However, as such storms will, it passed, and soon enough this controversy was forgotten in the whirlwind of perils and problems of the First World War.'[12]

The Aga Khan's version is clearly at variance with that of Mohamed Ali. Writing for the Judicial Committee appointed by Government in 1918, Mohamed Ali submitted a statement in the course of which he touched on this subject. He wrote:

'This I was prompted to do by an urgent appeal addressed to me by the Rt. Hon'ble Syed Ameer Ali who suggested my negotiating it with the Peoples' Bank. After considerable efforts I found that the pushing on of the sale of Ottoman Treasury Bonds would be a more feasible plan, and consequently I entered into communications with Jafar Bey, the Ottoman Consul-General at Bombay, and subsequently with Rifaat Pasha, the Turkish Finance Minister, direct, in addition to communicating through Dr. Ansari with the late Mahmud Shaukat Pasha, Grand Vazir and War Minister, and Talaat Pasha, then Minister of the Interior.'

The following telegram was sent by Mohamed Ali to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy:

12. Aga Khan, *The Memoirs*, pp. 128-29.

'Some Mussalmans are anxious to advance a loan to Turkey. I understand such action would not contravene His Majesty's declaration of neutrality. May I beg you to place this telegram before His Excellency the Viceroy to ascertain if such action is in any way contrary to law or British policy. Indian Mussalmans gratefully recognize the great efforts made by England to prevent Balkan aggression, and are convinced of her desire for the preservation of peace. An authoritative declaration that Government will not oppose the contemplated loan will confirm their confidence in the goodwill of England towards Turkey and such sympathy as is not inconsistent with neutrality. I beg you kindly send the reply by express telegram to enable me to announce it in the Jami Masjid after Friday prayers and publish in Saturday's *Comrade*.'

The following reply was received from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy:

'Clear the line.—The advance of loan by Mussalmans to Turkey would not contravene His Majesty's declaration of neutrality.'

Mohamed Ali telegraphed to the Private Secretary as follows:

'Please convey my hearty thanks to His Excellency for the message of assurances regarding advance of a loan by Indian Mussalmans to Turkey. The message was read to a large congregation in the Jami Masjid and elicited great enthusiasm and grateful recognition of Government's sincere sympathy. Shams-ul-Ulema Syed Ahmed Sahib, Imam of the Jami Masjid, invited the congregation to express the thanks of the Mussalmans of Delhi for this clear declaration by His Excellency and the congregation authorises me to convey their respectful gratitue.'

In order not to delay the remittance of as large a sum as possible to the Turkish Treasury he suggested to the leading members of the Muslim University Foundation Committee that the University Fund might be invested in Ottoman Treasury Bonds, and a sustained effort be commenced immediately after that to collect as a loan a million sterling from Mussalmans all over the country, including rulers of Indian States, on which the first charge should be the 30 lacs borrowed from the University Fund. This suggestion was highly approved by His Highness the Aga Khan who arranged with the Turkish Government for the return of these 30 lacs in any case after a year, whether Mussalmans succeeded

in collecting the million sterling or not. So insistent was the Aga Khan that, in order to set an example of confidence in Turkey's present and future solvency, he authorised him to withdraw for a year his own contribution of a lac from the University Fund.

'Just when the *London Times*, urged on by its Bombay correspondent, to whose article the very first extract from *The Comrade* accompanying the statement of charges was a rejoinder, was sneering at us that we had "made vague offers of financial help which we were quite incapable of fulfilling," and was lauding His Highness the Aga Khan to the skies as a political leader of Indian Mohamedans for his having taken "a wise and courageous step in the hope of checking these excesses," His Highness himself was sending me message after message, urging that if the University Fund could not in its entirety be loaned to Turkey, at least his own contribution should be remitted to it, and when he met me in England a few months later, he made it a grievance with me that I had not carried out his instructions.'[13]

Mohamed Ali's statement belongs to the period when the Muslim sentiment for Turkey was still strong in India, but the Aga Khan recorded his version some forty years after the event.

Mohamed Ali succeeded, however, in rendering some practical help by way of providing some comfort to the wounded. A Medical Mission led by Dr Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari, comprising eighty fully qualified doctors five of whom had European qualifications was organised. Every province of India was represented on this Mission. Among the ten male nurses were such eminent names as Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Shuaib Qureshi, Chaudhuri Khaliq-uz-Zaman, and Abdur Rahman Peshawari who stayed on in Turkey and later became Turkish Ambassador to Afghanistan. The Mission had the blessings of the British Government. At Delhi members of the Mission were led in a torch-light procession to the railway station. The Viceroy was present in a farewell party, whose proceedings were prominently published in *Comrade*. Mohamed Ali accompanied the Mission to Bombay from where it sailed for Turkey.

13. Written Statement.

After the departure of the Mission in December 1912, Mohamed Ali returned from Bombay to Delhi. He proceeded to Lahore, and, on 28 January 1913, he addressed a large mass meeting of Muslims outside Mochi Gate. He appeared in the uniform of the Medical Mission. He said the connection of Indian Muslims on religious grounds with the other Islamic kingdoms had lasted for thirteen hundred years. If Europe could not understand this the fault lay in its own understanding. At first the British Government declared a policy of neutrality, but that policy was soon changed and at the funeral of this false declaration Mr Asquith was the chief mourner. In previous European wars the victors always returned their territory to the vanquished, he gave several instances of this, and when the Turks conquered Greece they were being forced to give up territory which had not even been conquered. When many people turned against Government the Muslims had remained steadfastly loyal. Now they feared that England would join the powers in compelling Turkey to surrender Adrianople. The question of Turkey was one of life and death to Islam, so they must press their claims. The bare fact was that they held the hammer of religion in one hand and the cup of loyalty in the other. They would act so that the world admired them. Some people thought these meetings were seditious. 'But we do what the English have taught us in their own schools and colleges. I do not fear the gallows of a dacoit or the chains of a thief, but I fear you (the audience). Except God in Heaven and you on earth I fear no one. Do not think that your cries have had no effect on British foreign policy. I assure you that I have read documents (to the contrary), and we will succeed. Persist in your efforts. The English will either have to abandon their claim of republicanism and declare that they will rule us tyrannically with stick and sword, or the voice of seven crores of Muhammadans will surely have its effect. Otherwise we will break the heads of the English with the same stick of republicanism which they themselves have shown

us.'[14]

On 31 January 1913, Mohamed Ali was back again in Bombay, and addressed a meeting held under the auspices of the Anjuman-i-Zia-ul-Islam. His speech was a good deal more moderate than the one delivered three days before at Lahore. The resolution moved by him urged that British foreign policy should be shaped with due regard to Muslim opinion. He said that while the Viceroy respected Islam and understood the extra-territorial sympathies of Muslims throughout the world, British Cabinet Minister had not made it equally clear that they understood the state of feeling in India, and appreciated their necessity of a truly Imperial policy. In the course of his speech he referred to a naval demonstration which, he said, had taken place with the might of Great Britain ranged, as it was believed by Mussalmans, against Turkey. He hoped that no action would be taken by the British Government which could be misunderstood or would give rise to the feeling in India that His Majesty's Government was unfriendly to Turkey, and was breaking its earlier pledge of neutrality.[15]

In November 1912 the Intelligence Department received a report that the arrival of Mohamed Ali in Delhi had greatly stimulated the activity of pan-Islamism in what was formerly a very quiet place. This was confirmed by the Chief Commissioner who remarked that Mohamed Ali had whipped up a good deal of enthusiasm among men of the young barrister type and students, but that the older men were against him, and the Anjuman who were collecting subscriptions for Turkish relief openly stated that they would have nothing to do with the Medical Mission which Mohamed Ali was arranging to send to Turkey under Dr Ansari.[16]

Mohamed Ali's enthusiasm enabled him to overcome all obstacles and to collect the necessary money for the Mission which left Bombay on 15 December 1912.

The following extracts from letters by Dr Ansari, the leader of

14. F. H. Vincent, 'History Sheet of Mohamed Ali.'
15. Ibid. 16. Ibid.

the Mission, were published in the *Comrade* of 8 February 1913:

'It may be of interest, by way of comparison, to mention here that the results of the German Red Cross Hospitals, the British Red Crescent Hospital sent by Mr. Amir Ali and the French Red Cross Hospital have been very unsatisfactory, whether due to the lack of skill or interest of the doctors sent in these Missions. In fact there is a feeling here, no doubt erroneous, owing to their bad results, that these men deliberately maimed and dismembered the patients when a conservative treatment would have saved the lives and limbs of many of the patients placed under their treatment.'[17]

'I am convinced after thorough and searching investigation that this (Croissant Rouge) is the only organisation worthy of support from India where every penny is used to good purpose, and Dr. Muhammad Husain and myself have thought it necessary to sign a telegram sent by Bessim Omar Pasha to the different papers in India for publication in order to direct all the money to the Croissant Rouge and prevent its going to quarters where one cannot find anything about money.'[18]

Speaking on 12 July 1913 to the students of the Aligarh College Dr Ansari compared the results of medical treatment by the different missions, giving figures showing the percentage of recovery of patients treated by the Indian Mission as compared with those treated by the British. The former announcement was greeted with cheers and the latter with hisses. He stated that other work undertaken besides medical relief was that of succouring the destitute Muslim refugees who had been driven out of Turkey in Europe. He asserted that the Turks knew little or nothing about their Indian brothers till the members of the Mission arrived, and that they were soon made a good deal of. He described his interview with the Sultan, and said that the latter had thanked him with tears in his eyes, and that he looked as though he were suffering terribly on account of the war. He mentioned specific cases of Turkish bravery to show that the warlike spirit of the nation was not dead, one of his stories being that the Turkish ship 'Hamidieh'

17. Dr Ansari's letter dated 11 January 1913.
18. Dr Ansari's letter dated 12 January 1913 to the Editor of *Comrade*.

with Rauf Bey as its Captain, rammed six vessels of the Greek fleet in succession. He asserted that the most important result of the Mission was the formation of a bond of union between the Turkish nation and the Indians.[19]

Mohamed Ali was present at the reception given to Dr Ansari at the Jami Masjid, Delhi, on 11 July 1913. In the course of his speech on this occasion Dr Ansari referred to the valour of the Turks, and said they had to fight not only the allies but all the European powers who had assisted them in one way or another. He advised the audience not to believe in the civilisation of Europe, and referred to the atrocities commited by Christians in the Balkans. He had seen cities and town conquered by the Christians completely denuded of all the buildings that belonged to Muslims; even the mosques were not spared. In the Christian quarters of such cities there were no traces of war; while the Muslim quarters had been utterly destroyed. He advised the audience not to forget these atrocities in their dealings with Christians who were bent upon wiping their religion off the face of the earth. He then gave his views on the causes of the Turkish defeat, and asked the Muslims to subscribe for the new colonies in Anatolia. Before Dr Ansari spoke Mohamed Ali recited a poem by Shibli Numani in which the writer referred to the atrocities in the Balkans, and suggested that the defeat of the Turks was the fulfilment of the long cherished desire of Mr Gladstone.

WITH all the differences which appeared on the surface, the fact is that Mohamed Ali was working in close co-operation with the Government of India and he had no intention just yet to fall foul of it. On the contrary, he curried its favour. On the return of the Medical Mission from Turkey he suggested to the Private Secretary of the Viceroy that it would help if Lord Hardinge, as a token of his appreciation of the work done by Dr Ansari, agreed to his appointment as Honorary Personal Surgeon to the Viceroy.

19. Vincent, op. cit.

He recommended that Kaiser-i-Hind Medals should be given to other members of the Mission. With his letter he enclosed a note regarding the credentials of Dr Ansari as a leading surgeon.[20]

Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, was an astute man He maintained private contacts with Indian political leaders and had a personal equation with Gokhale—the leader of the Indian National Congress. The Muslim League seemed to be a moribund organisation and did little more than pass a few pious resolutions. It failed at this hour of crisis, when the fate of Turkey was agitating the Muslim mind, to co-ordinate the various Relief Funds which had been floated by different persons and organisations. It did not set up a fund of its own despite appeals from Mohamed Ali—the senior leadership seemed slow to respond. Taking them to task for their apathy he analysed the failings of the League leaders :

'One is so utterly wrapped up in self that he can only work as a Dictator—either a Caesar or nothing. Another has so little faith in mankind that his doubts paralyse his good intentions. A third is valient enough to lead his followers right up to the walls of the beleagured castle and then retires. A fourth shows the utmost courage but little intelligence, and produces in his followers feelings alternating between admiration for his sincerity and despair at his futilities and contradictions. A faith coming from the bosom of the unknown flits across a gasping world as a bright-tailed comet, and then, mysteriously disappears, perhaps into the bosom of the unknowable.[21]

In this chaos and confusion, Mohamed Ali, after months of agony and pain amounting to what seemed at the time a veritable betrayal of Islam which was being held on ransom in Turkey, decided to step into the breach. He argued, 'We say to ourselves : why wander in the quest of leaders when we ourselves may be the way as well as the wayfarer, the guide as well as the goal? We

20. Letter from Mohamed Ali to Sir James Du Bulay, P.S. to V. on *Comrade* letter head. Address for reply given c/o Sir Fazalbhai Ebrahim, Peddar Road, Bombay. H.P. 57, p. 426.

21. *Comrade* (1912), p. 304.

have tried one "leader" after another, and found them all either wanting or inaccessible in the hour of need, and with the Arab saying كبرنا موت الكبراء, the death of the great has made me great, as a concession to modesty, we are ready to step into the breach.'[22]

Mohamed Ali had certainly emerged as the leader of the Muslim intelligentsia—the doctors, barristers and students. Lord Hardinge saw this and kept in touch with him. The best way to keep him calm at this time was to help him in the humanitarian assistance to the sick and wounded in Turkey that seemed to give some satisfaction to the Muslim community. The relief was initially provided through a remittance to Syed Amir Ali who was in London. The arrangement was not satisfactory. The Viceroy promised to help through official channels. The Consul General at Salonika was authorised by the Foreign Office to draw on them £100 sterling and refund the money received from India through the India Office.[23] Within two weeks of the first gesture the Viceroy cabled the Secretary of State:

> 'The Editor of Comrade desires now to supply a further sum of £900, of which £400 should be placed at the disposal of the British authorities at Monastir and £500 at the disposal of the British Consul General at Salonika for relief of Muslim War sufferers, and more particularly for the prevention of death through exposure and starvation.
>
> 'Firstly: he asks that those relieved should be informed that the funds had been provided by Indian subscribers rich and poor to the Comrade's Relief Fund.
>
> 'Secondly: that an account of the expenditure, including a statement of the numbers relieved, may be supplied for publication in the Comrade.'[24]

The Consul General at Salonika asked if he might read 'prevention of death through disease,' as authority to devote the money to the camp hospital then being installed.[25] Mohamed Ali agreed and the Viceroy promptly communicated his agreement to the

22. Ibid.
23. H.P.: S.S. to V. 6 January 1913, I.F. Tel. No. 14, p. 14.
24. Ibid.: 9 F. V. to S.S. No. 23, p. 1.
25. Ibid.: I.F. S.S. to V. No. 38, p. 10.

Secretary of State.[26]

The Foreign Office explained that there were four thousand famine-stricken refugees in great distress at Sevres and the Consul General asked if he might expend £400 of the *Comrade* money on relief work with the Editor's permission.[27] There was a fully competent American missionary who had consented to proceed to Sevres for the purpose of distributing *Comrade* relief.[28] Was the Editor agreeable to this proposal?

The Editor not only agreed but gave a general authority to the Consul General to use funds suitably in his jurisdiction.[29] The activities were expanded from the region of Salonika to Adrianople by March 1913, but in early April this close co-operation between the Viceroy and Mohamed Ali was clouded and the seed of suspicion was sown by no less a person than Syed Amir Ali, who was connected with relief work.

Amir Ali went to see the Marquis of Crewe, the Secretary of State for India, and protesting his own loyalty told him that 'he had repressed a number of statements which he believed were facts'. This referred to the atrocities being perpetrated on the Turks not only in the battlefield but in the camps on the wounded and the suffering. On the contrary, he said, '*Comrade* missions have regularly acted as reporters of activities.' Amir Ali told Lord Crewe that he considered Mohamed Ali a dangerous person. The Secretary of State informed the Viceroy that Amir Ali 'seemed to think that young Moslems here and in India had got much out of hand, but said that he would go on trying to restrain them.'[30]

Meanwhile Mohamed Ali had offered another £2000. The Foreign Office received information that 30,000 Turkish prisoners were suffering from privation at Adrianople. The Consul General suggested that it would be better to arrange with Mohamed Ali

26. Ibid.: 9 F. V. to S.S. No. 56, dated 23 January 1913, p. 23.
27. Ibid.: I.F. No. 81, S.S. to V. (4 Feb. 1913), p. 22.
28. Ibid.: I.F. S.S. to V. No. F.F. (3 Feb. 1913), p. 21.
29. Ibid.: I.F. V. to S.S. No. 95, p. 38.
30. Ibid.: 119. Vol. III. S.S. to V. dated 3 April 1913.

that his latest offer should go to this object. The Foreign Office did not consider it wise 'to put ourselves under obligation to him by accepting money specifically for this object'.[31]

Lord Hardinge, referring to the Secretary of State's interview with Syed Amir Ali, wrote back on 24 April 1913:

> 'I am glad that you had an interview with Amir Ali and were not unfavourably impressed with his assurances. It is perfectly true that young Mohammadans in this country are out of hand, and that Mohamed Ali of the *Comrade* is a dangerous person. Still I hear on all sides that Amir Ali did at one time fan the flames of Mohammadan discontent. I am trying to collect some proofs of this.'[32]

In the background of this suspicion and strain Mohamed Ali came out with a bombshell confirming that he was indeed 'a dangerous person'. In a telegram to the Viceroy which he faithfully communicated to the Secretary of State, Mohamed Ali used strong language in alleging that Bibles and anti-Turkish pamphlets were being distributed in the relief camps. This is what he wrote: 'Have just heard from reliable source that General Birdwood gives along with every relief payment to Adrianople Musalmans a Bible and an anti-Turkish pamphlet. My informant himself saw one such Bible. This and with our money!' exclaimed Mohamed Ali. 'Will England never learn to spare our feelings? Can you imagine our distress at this treacherous breach of faith? ' asked Mohamed Ali.[33]

The Foreign Office issued a complete denial of the allegations.[34] The Viceroy, commenting on it, reiterated that Mohamed Ali 'is a pestilent fellow, and is always trying to stir up trouble and fish in troubled waters. I was very glad to be able to give him this

31. Ibid. : I.F. S.S. to V. No. 231, (12 April 1913), p. 63.

32. Ibid. : 119, Letter dated 24 April 1913, from V. to S.S. Letter No. 20, p. 50.

33. Ibid.: 9 F. V. to S.S. No. 392 (Telegram dated 29 June 1913), p. 152.

34. Ibid. : 9 F.S.S. to V. No. 386 (telegram dated 11 July 1913), p. 102.

rebuff,'[35] he concluded.

WE must leave the Balkan scene and revert for a while to the Delhi Darbar of 1911. An incident involved the Gaekwad of Baroda, the second ruling chief of princely India. It was alleged that the Prince was guilty of deliberate and studied insolence to the person of the King Emperor for he chose to come into his presence in cheap white cotton and turned his back upon the throne. There was a clamour in the British and the Anglo-Indian press. Mohamed Ali, always grateful to the Gaekwad for what he had done for him, used the columns of the *Comarde* to tell the true story. He was in a strong position to counter the allegations because he was personally present in the Darbar. Regrettable though the incident was, it provided him with an opportunity to pay back some of the debt he owed to the Ruler of Baroda.

In order to keep Muslims in good humour Sir Harcourt Butler had announced, on the eve of the Delhi Darbar of 1911, that the establishment of the Aligarh Muslim University was only a question of money. Later he altered the word 'only,' in his statement, into 'mainly'. Nevertheless, there was no dearth of assurances that the Muslims could get a University the moment they were able to produce three million rupees. This they did in 1911. Anticipating the grant of a Charter a Committee was appointed to draft a Constitution. The Muslims were taken completely by surprise when the next year Government announced that the proposed University would be styled the University of Aligarh instead of the Muslim University. The Government had by now seen how dangerous the 'Muslim' sentiment was becoming and they were not anxious to give it a further fillip. The Constitution Committee requested the Secretary of State to reconsider his decision. It also appointed a Sub-Committee to draft a reply to Government. Mohamed Ali was a member of the Sub-Committee.

35. Ibid.: 119, Vol. III, Letter No. 35, from V. to SS. (dated 16 July 1913), p. 92.

The plain fact was that the loyalist traditions in Aligarh were undergoing a manifest change. The confidence displayed by students in the conflict with the British Principal and staff was in sharp contrast with the vacillating conservatism of Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk who was unable to take a firm stand. The students were up against the British staff. With grant-in-aid and control of the Executive Body, the Government of India wanted to secure this front against the rising tide of 'Muslim' sentiments.

The susceptible Muslim students could not be thrown to the young wolves that were now prowling around. The elder leaders pleaded for patience and suggested that the affairs of the University could not be settled in a hurry and certainly not in the manner the younger, immature elements wished it to be managed. One of these young, immature men was Mohamed Ali. Castigating the impotence of conservative leadership he wrote :

'Unfortunately the hesitating and vacillating conservatism—even if such a thing can be called conservatism—of the regime of the late Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk has led some people, including a type of Government officials, to think that among the Musalmans only youth is capable of honest and determined action. That is a high enough compliment for Moslem youth, but it is not always meant as such. . . . None are so hard on youth as the young, and, consequently, we are not at all surprised to hear of the dangers of being led by young men. . . .'[36]

Muslim opinion on this question was divided into three groups. The first, a microscopic minority, would have nothing to do with the mutilated scheme of Government which was aimed at destroying the Muslim character of the University. The second, again a very small minority, who would accept the scheme suggested by Government in its entirety. The majority opinion, while willing to concede reasonable powers of supervision to Government, stood for maintaining the Muslim character of an institution which had inspired Indian Muslims since its foundation by Syed Ahmad Khan. The struggle was to continue for some time.

36. *Comrade* (1912), p. 151.

For twenty months Mohamed Ali stayed in Calcutta pleading the cause of his community and while enjoying Calcutta at its best he longed for Aligarh with all its faults. 'Need it then surprise anyone,' he asked, 'if we confess that even before the *Hijra* of the Government to Delhi, we had contemplated a flight to Aligarh. All that the Darbar announcement did was to turn over wandering footsteps in a slightly different direction. When we were maturing these plans, we had hopes of placing ourselves not so much in the heart of the Imperial Enclave, as at the threshold of a great University. Today the University appears a long way off; (it came in 1920) but there is some consolation in the old observation,

> 'It's not in mortals to command success
> But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve.'

Mohamed Ali wholly approved of the decision to shift the capital to Delhi, a move which he thought should have been made in 1858. The *Comrade* which had made its debut in Calcutta was on its way to Delhi. This is how it announced its departure on 14 September 1912:[37]

> 'Twenty months ago to a day we made our bow to the public on the stage of Calcutta journalism with all the nervousness of a young actor on a first night, and as we expressed on that occasion, inner apprehensions made us fancy that the play-goers in the Boxes, the Orchestra Stalls, and the Dress Circle were so many critics of the type of Judge Jeffrieys. But the people who had feared most were the Pitites and the gods in the Gallery. However, we were not left long in suspense, for the first cheers of the play-goers came after the very first scene as a tremendous relief. Opera glasses were levelled at us from the dignified Boxes. Smiles of approval were noticed in the decorous stalls with their subdued enthusiasm. The sound of merry laughter came from the Dress Circle. Lusty clappings of hands resounded in the Pit, and the gods in the Gallery frankly, shamelessly human in their full-throated "encores". We acknowledged the heartiness of the welcome, though we never presume to mistake the encouragement of the Old Play-goers to a novice on the First Night for the critical appreciation reserved only for the seasoned player. The call-boy was too insistent for us to remain long before the curtain enjoining

37. *Comrade*, quoted by Allah Bakhsh Yusufi, op. cit., pp. 119-20.

all this applause, for other scenes were to follow and many a slip was there to intervene between the final cup and the lip.

'Today after the First Act, we step once more before the curtain, not in response to a call, but to announce that Act lies in another land. Some of the dramatic critics would quarrel with us for the infraction of the Greek Unities. But the romantic beauty of Delhi has proved more attractive than the classic severity of Calcutta. When shifting the scene we have been compelled to break not only the unity of place, but of time also, and the Second Act will commence after an interval of two weeks.'

THE change in the tone and the temper of young Muslims was hardly reflected in the proceedings of the Muslim League. In 1912, in the Calcutta Session, immediately after the British betrayal of Muslim Bengal, there is not a word in the presidential address of 'Nawab Bahadur Sir Salimullah, G.C.I.E.' of Dacca on the events in Libya, Persia and most of all in Turkey.[38] In the proceedings of the Session one reads of the 'epoch-making visit of King George V'; the British Government is described as 'the best, the most humane and the wisest of all European Governments'; Lord Morley is referred to as a 'great philosopher and statesman,' a reference is made to Amir Ali's appointment as a Privy Councillor; and the only thing lacking, it seems, in the life of the Indian Muslims was the appointment of 'a well-qualified Mohammedan representative of our Special Communal interests in the Imperial Executive Council'.[39]

In this Session Mohamed Ali proposed a resolution on the annulment of the partition of Bengal. To this we have referred earlier. The most important development that took place in 1912 was a resolution of the Muslim League Council to set 'the attainment of a system of self-Government suitable to India,' as the goal of the Muslim League. Mohamed Ali supported the resolution.

He also moved a resolution 'appreciating the tough fight of the Indians in South Africa protesting against racial distinctions, and praying that the Government might be pleased to remove these

38. *Muslim League Documents*, pp. 231-49.
39. Ibid., pp. 221-22.

distinctions.[40] He spoke on the principles of Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill and pleaded for its acceptance. Mian Muhammad Shafi said that Islam did not tolerate compulsion. Mohamed Ali retorted: 'Is there a reason to oppose the compulsion to light lamps at sunset?" The Muslim religion, he argued, was embodied in a small book which had been their guiding light through all ages. But that small book contained a number of stories, a number of directions relating to the actual circumstances where the revelations were made, and a great many exhortations; yet the whole body of Islamic jurisprudence was based on that book. The duty to acquire learning was commanded by Islam.

While Mohamed Ali was speaking, Mian Muhammad Shafi made several attempts to interrupt at which Abul Kalam Azad remarked that only title-holders were opposing the Bill in order to show their loyalty. An uproar ensued.[41]

A reference was made in the 1912 Session to 'Mr. Mohamed Ali of Aligarh, a distinguished graduate of Oxford University,'[42] and to the *Comrade* and the services he had rendered to the community and the country. It was in this Session that Mohamed Ali said that 'separate electorate was a hateful necessity—like divorce, which was accepted by Islam as a hateful necessity.'[43]

WE cannot do better than to conclude this chapter with an excerpt from a dossier prepared by a senior British Intelligence Officer in October 1913, for the benefit of his Government:

'The views expressed in his paper (the *Comrade*) during the first year were generally moderate, though frequently critical of Government measures and occasionally rather impertinent in tone, but he was not regarded as a political agitatoı By the beginning of 1912, however, he began to express more pronounced pan-Islamic views, and became an ardent exponent of the feelings of exasperation found amongst younger Muhammadans in India by the Turko-Italian War and affairs in Persia. His attitude towards Government became carping and occasionally mischievous, and

40. Ibid., p. 249.
41. Ibid., p. 253-54.
42. Ibid., p. 228.
43. Ibid., p. 256.

as his paper was ably written he came to be recognised as a person who might give trouble. It was not only recent events in other Muhammadan countries that had caused annoyance to the Young Muhammadan party in India, but they considered that they had a grievance in the reversal of the partition of Bengal announced in December 1911. From this also they derived the lesson that agitation was the way to success.

'The transfer of the capital to Delhi caused him to remove his press there, and the first issue of the *Comrade* published in Delhi was dated the 12th October 1912. No security was taken from him under the Press Act as his attitude towards Government officials was conciliatory and reasonable, and it was hoped that he would respond to considerate treatment. He proposed to make his paper into a daily, but he has not yet succeeded in doing so. An Urdu edition called the *Hamdard* was started in 1913.'[44]

44. Vincent, op. cit.

Chapter Four

OPEN CONFLICT
[1913-1915]

Confiscation of a Pamphlet Come to Macedonia and Help Us—*The First Case under the Press Act of 1910—Judgment of the Calcutta High Court Peeves the Viceroy—Launching of* Hamdard, *the Urdu Daily—Cawnpore Mosque Incident—Muslim Delegation to England and Its Success—The End of the Balkan Wars and the Political Scene in India—Muslim Deputation to Lord Hardinge and the Viceroy's Assurances—The Outbreak of the First World War and Reactions in India—The Leading Article in* Comrade, *'Choice of the Turks'—Forfeiture of the Security of* Comrade *Press—War against Turkey and the Consequences—Internment of Mohamed Ali*

In 1913 Mohamed Ali came into open conflict with the official world. The *casus belli* was the forfeiture, under the Indian Press Act of 1910, of a pamphlet that he along with several other Muslims had received from Turkey. The pamphlet dealt with atrocities committed by the Balkan Allies in Macedonia and appealed to the British for help. Mohamed Ali took the case to the High Court of Calcutta. In the first case the High Court tried under the Press Act of 1910, the Bench pilloried the authors and sponsors of the Act. In a unanimous judgment the Chief Justice, Sir Lawrence Jenkins, commented that the safeguards provided in the Act were illusory and incapable of being enforced. He wrote, 'The language of the Section is as wide as human ingenuity could make it. It is difficult to see to what lengths the operation of this section might not be plainly extended by an ingenious mind.'[1]

Lord Hardinge reported to the Secretary of State on 4 September 1913:

1. *Muslim League Documents*, pp. 283-84.

'There have been two cases in the High Court brought nominally against the Government of Bengal and the University but really against the Government of India, by Mohamed Ali and Rasul, the latter being one of the three University lecturers whom we ejected. I am glad to say that they both lost their cases, although in the case of Mohamed Ali the Chief Justice, in a very needless manner, went out of his way to give that arch-agitator a pat on the back. He also said that those who approved of the notification of confiscation were the allies of the Christian bashi-bazouks. Rather a strong statement for a Chief Justice, but his hostility to Government always exceeds his discretion.'[2]

The Viceroy was so uneasy about the case that a week later he wrote again on the subject to the Secretary of State:

'I could hardly believe that the Chief Justice would dare to assume the responsibility of the High Court deciding that the dissemination of such a pamphlet could do no harm in the country. The Chief Justice admitted in his judgment that he had no power to interfere and that the Government of India was the best judge as to what was good for the country, but nevertheless he went into a long disquisition on the merits of the case, of course in a sense hostile to the Government, and finally gave Mohamed Ali a pat on the back. This judgment has caused great indignation amongst all sensible people.'[3]

Here is the story in Mohamed Ali's own words:

'Mr. Eardley Norton, who in the Calcutta High Court so brillianty and feelingly fought for me, without fee or retainer, the case against the confiscation of this pamphlet, referred to the view taken by Englishmen in England of this pamphlet, which contrasted violently with the view of Government. There Lord Lamington had formed a committee for the purpose of giving greater publicity to the appeal of the Turks and demanding an International Commission of Investigation. Mr. Norton said he had in his hand a pamphlet—based on the proscribed pamphlet—to which Lord Lamington had contributed a Foreword. It was entitled "The Balkan Massacres: A Turkish Appeal to the Women and Men of Great Britain" and underneath this title was printed in red a Cross, and below that the words: "A British Response and Demand for an International Commission of Investigation," and two texts from the Gospel according to St. Matthews. That, he said, was the

2. H. P.: 119, Letter No. 44, p. 118.
3. Ibid.: Vol. III, Letter No. 45, p. 120.

response of England. But the notification proscribing the same pamphlet was the response of the Government of India.'[4]

In the course of the judgment the Chief Justice summed up the argument in these words:

'It is true that it refers to crusades, but this has reference not to any crusade proclaimed by Christianity but to the proclamation of the King of Bulgaria. On the other hand, there are passages which expressly state that Turkish excesses are not condoned, which shows that Christians are not attacked as such, and narrate the protest made and help given by Christians other than the Balkan allies engaged in the war. There is no racial or political tie between the Balkan allies and the Christian subjects of His Majesty in India which would make it possible that wrongs committed by the former should be considered imputable to the latter. Nor is there really any creedal link because it is not suggested that the acts complained of were done in the name of and with the authority of Christianity, but in betrayal of it. On the contrary, it is argued, the suppression of this pamphlet might tend in the Mussalman mind to band the Christians of this country with the authors of these wrongs and make it appear that it was desired that these should be made public lest they might throw discredit on Christian subjects in India. The pamphlet then, it is said, so far from bringing Englishmen or His Majesty's Christian subjects into hatred or contempt is the highest compliment that could be paid to them.'

The Chief Justice concluded his judgment:

'. . . One word and that is as to the motive of the present application. The applicant, Mr. Mohamed Ali is by no means unknown in India; he is a journalist of position and repute. Though he is not an accused, he tells us that he regards himself as under the stigma which (he declares) must attach to any journalist who has come under the operation of an Act directed, primarily at any rate, against a criminal movement marked by outrages which so shocked the public sentiments as to call for this drastic legislation. But even if he has not succeeded in proving the negative that fate and the law have thrown in his way, at least his application has not been wholly in vain. The Advocate-General, representing the Government, has publicly announced that Mr. Mohamed Ali's forfeited pamphlet is not, in his opinion, a seditious libel, and, indeed, that he attributes no criminal offences to Mr. Mohamed Ali: he was even willing to concede and believe he

4. Written Statement.

was acting in the highest interests of humanity and civilisation. In this, I think, the Advocate-General made no admission which it was not proper for him to make. Mr. Mohamed Ali then has lost his book, but he has retained his character : and he is free from the stigma that he apprehended. And this doubtless will be some consolation to him when we dismiss, as we must, his present application.'

The discovery that the law was defective led to the dismissal of the case.

Sir Harry Stephen, a member of the Bench, made the following significant observations in the course of his separate judgment:

'In attempting to form an opinion on it I find myself in a position which, as far as I am aware, no judge in the British Empire has been placed since the remote days of early English jurisprudence. I have to decide a question of fact on such evidence as is supplied by one document. The side on whom the onus of proving his case is cast is not in a position to give any evidence. As the other side has not called any witnesses, nor cross-examination has taken place.... Such information as I have is unverified and general to a high degree ; it has never been my duty to acquire information in the matter and absolutely none has been supplied to me on this occasion. Under these circumstances I have no doubt that any opinion I may express will be received by others with the respect that is due to the office I have the honour to hold, but it will be impossible for me to share in this feeling. . . . Acting on such information as I have, I entertain no doubt as to what my answer should be. But the absence of doubt is probably due to the absence of evidence and cannot be taken as going far toward showing that the opinion is correct.'[5]

Within twenty months of its life in Calcutta the *Comrade* had already become the most significant and influential mouthpiece of Muslim India. Lord Hardinge and his wife were among its regular readers. Lady Hardinge made anxious inquiries on the telephone if the publication of an issue was delayed.[6]

When Mohamed Ali went to see Sir Fleetwood Wilson, a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, who was returning to

5. Written Statement, pp. 24-27.

6. S. Moinul Haq, *et al.* (Eds.), *A History of the Freedom Movement*, (Karachi), Vol. III, Part I, p. 148.

England after completing his tenure of office, he took him to a room where his luggage was being packed and showed him a file of the *Comrade* which he said he was taking home as a gift for the Editor of *Punch*. He could not think of a better present for his friend at home.[7]

But the *Comrade* was an English weekly and its appeal was limited to the intellectual *elite*. Mohamed Ali decided it was time to talk to the general public. Announcing his plan to bring out an Urdu daily from Delhi he wrote in the *Comrade*:

'We must educate the masses, make them useful citizens. . . . Our vanguard must not be cut off from the main body. It is a sad plight if the sheep remain without a shepherd; but it is sadder still if the shepherd be without sheep. To teach the masses, we must use their own language. . . . We have decided to launch, so to speak, a companion vessel, to the good ship *Comrade* in the shape of an Urdu daily paper and have taken great pains to secure a goodly crew. It is useless to depend upon the slow and cumbersome process of lithography in these days and the *Hamdard* which will speak for itself will lead Urdu journalism out of the Stone Age.'[8]

The arrangement was that what was intended for Government should appear in the *Comrade* and what was intended for the people should appear in the *Hamdard*. The Urdu paper was meant to educate the pepole whereas the *Comrade* had to be their spokesman as well, and to act as a medium between them and their rulers.[9]

It was a bold venture in the field of Urdu journalism for at this time Abul Kalam Azad was editing *Al-Hilal* in Calcutta and Zafar Ali Khan was the Editor of *Zamindar* in Lahore. It was certainly not an easy task to compete with these well-established giants.

The change from lithography to modern techniques of type was the first innovation in Urdu journalism. New machines were ordered from Beirut and Cairo which used the new method for

7. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan*, p. 101.
8. *The Comrade* (1912), p. 245.
9. *My Life : A Fragment*, p. 63.

Arabic journals. The well-known Urdu novelist, Abdul Haleem Sharar, was named Editor. But it took months for the machines to arrive and the Editor-designate returned to Lucknow in sheer disgust.

The first issue came out from the new machines on 13 June 1913, and marked a new chapter in the history of Urdu journalism. The Editor, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, the well-known Urdu writer, provides a glimpse of the atmosphere in the editorial room:

'Every evening members of the editorial board met in the Chief Editor's room. In this meeting Mohamed Ali would suggest a subject for each. He would emphasise that it was more important to read than to write. Sometime one had to read ten or twelve books before writing an article. My first contribution was an article on Egypt which appeared in instalments. I was given a dozen of books to read; Mohamed Ali dictated some notes to me. It took me eight to ten days to write the first article. When I took the manuscript to him, Mohamed Ali read a few lines and threw it away saying, "What rubbish you have written!" I was very proud of myself but I cannot describe the shame and humiliation I felt in this first encounter. I made another attempt and revised the article but Mohamed Ali did not approve it. I was asked to rewrite it. I sat through the night and wrote it again. The next morning I showed it to Mohamed Ali. He read through the whole article and embraced me. He showered such generous praise on me that I felt embarrassed. His criticism in the first instance was as embarrassing as was now his approval.

'Mohamed Ali was exacting in his standards and he applied the same rigorous rules to himself. He would sit up a whole night with books and references scattered all over his bed to produce an article. He paid much attention to small details and always demanded precision and accuracy. Once I saw a proof copy of his article. Some mistakes remained uncorrected. When Mohamed Ali saw the article in print he walked into my office and gave me a dressing down. I sent in my resignation and came away. The next day Shaukat Ali came to my house and told me that Mohamed Ali had not eaten since I left the office. When I went back there was no complaint—Mohamed Ali hugged me and wept bitterly. I felt so ashamed of myself.'[10]

When at long last the *Hamdard* was issued, the Balkan War was all but over, and a newspaper printed from movable types

10. *Aligarh Magazine*, Special Number, 1954-55, pp. 69-73.

in an unfamiliar script could not ride, as it were, on the crest of a wave. Its circulation did not increase, even after making an allowance for the fact that sensationalism was strictly a taboo, and the leader-writers who were inclined to follow the prevailing fashion of sprinkling red pepper with a rather lavish hand were never allowed to forget that the new publication had its own traditions to establish. For a year the paper appeared in an unpopular script. But the experiment proved a failure. The First World War broke out two months after *Hamdard* began to appear in the old familiar *Nastaliq* script, the delight of the calligraphist, but the despair of the typographist.

While litigation in the press case was going on in Calcutta, an incident occurred in Cawnpore. On 1 July 1913, a portion of the building of a mosque was demolished to accommodate some technical requirements of straightening a road. Mohamed Ali was on friendly terms with the Lt. Governor of the United Provinces, Sir James Meston. He took up the case with him as soon as the news leaked out in May that the Municipal Chairman was contemplating such an action. The Governor, however, held that the building to be demolished was a bathing enclosure and not part of the sacred building. The Muslim sentiments were ignored for the sake of a symmetrical alignment of a road. In a long letter to Sir James, Mohamed Ali asked whether the alignment of a road was worth the price demanded from Muslims. He argued that a place used for ablutions was an integral part of a mosque and whatever sacredness attached to the other portions of the mosque attached to this also. He told Sir James that he had refrained from discussing the matter in his newspapers—he had two by now, the *Comrade* and the *Hamdard*—because he hoped that good sense would prevail and that the matter would be settled before it got out of hand.

Sir James, however, remained adamant. Demolition was ordered. This led to agitation. The Muslims of Cawnpore, in a mammoth public meeting on 13 August, lodged a strong protest. After the

meeting many went to see the mosque which was the subject of protest. Some started replacing the fallen bricks in the demolished portion. The police appeared on the scene and having failed to persuade the crowd to leave the premises opened fire, killing many men, women and children. A high-powered delegation comprising leading Muslims of the United Provinces waited on Sir James Meston, but the Lt.-Governor would not budge an inch.

Lord Hardinge, writing on 16 August 1913, told the Secretary of State:

'I am very sad about this incident at Cawnpore which has caused so much loss of life. It is a matter which I took in hand myself about three weeks ago, and wrote to Meston that the matter was no longer provincial, but had assumed an Imperial aspect, and that he should either issue a communique to the press saying that the washing place that had been removed had nothing to do with the Mosque, and that he would build it in another part of the compound, or as an alternative he should hold an independent enquiry on which influential Mohammedans would be represented in strength. He issued a communique on the 24th July, showing clearly that the demolished building had nothing to do with the sacred enclave of the Mosque. He was, I knew, going to visit Cawnpore in the first week of August, and I heard he had arranged to meet a deputation of Mohammedan notables, so I let the matter rest. I knew, however, from what I had learnt at Delhi that an agitation was being engineered from Delhi, with a view to creating trouble, and it appears that, although the Cawnpore Mohammedans were not deeply interested in the subject, they were goaded to frenzy by agitators sent to inflame them, and proceeded in a procession with black flags to attempt to rebuild the washing place and to stone the police officers who were there on duty. As far as I can gather the police who strangely enough were nearly all Mohammedans, acted with discretion and courage, and it was only when the matters had assumed a very serious aspect that armed police were brought up by the Magistrate. The moment Meston heard of the incident, he reported it to me, and went straight off to Cawnpore. He reports that everything is quiet there now, but I telegraphed to him that I hoped he would settle the question once and for all, so that there should be no further cause for trouble. Much as I regret that lives should have been lost, I am not at all sure that the incident will not have a good result in the end, since the Delhi agitators, headed by Mohamed Ali of the *Comrade*, have simply been looking for trouble the last two

months, and I hope and believe that this incident will bring discredit upon them.'[11]

Lord Hardinge's hopes of bringing discredit to Mohamed Ali were, however, not to be realised.

The Muslims having failed to get satisfaction from the local authorities decided to send a delegation to England. It was decided that Mohamed Ali and the Secretary of the Muslim League, Syed Wazir Hasan, should represent the Muslim case. Passports were secured under the unfamiliar names of M. Ali and W. Hasan. They left Delhi incognito. Nobody knew of their plans until they issued a statement on board the ship apologising for their hasty and secret departure. The Viceroy was caught by surprise. For once the 'agitators' had beaten the British intelligence. Lord Hardinge cabled a frantic message to Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State, on 12 September:

'Mohamed Ali of Comrade and Wazir Husain, Secretary of the Moslem League of Lucknow, left suddenly for England last Saturday on a self-imposed mission to represent in England the views of the Mohammedan community. The Mohammedan leaders repudiate these two persons as representing them and regard them as mischievous.

'Wazir Husain is a man of no importance whatever while Mohamed Ali is a mischievous agitator, largely responsible for creating the present agitation by provocative misrepresentations in his paper, for which we have had to take security from him.

'With a view to increasing their importance, they will undoubtedly endeavour to obtain interviews at the India Office and probably at the Foreign Office, and I strongly recommend that no encouragement be given to those two persoes.'[12]

He followed up the matter in a letter in which he said:

'I hope that no encouragement will be given to either of these two persons. They are both firebrands and agitators, and there is absolutely no doubt that the agitation which at the present moment is pervading the Mohammedan community in India is largely due to the misrepresentation of Mohamed Ali and the extreme

11. H.P.: Vol. III, Letter No. 38, p. 102.

12. Ibid.: I.F. No. 562, p. 324. Wazir Hasan is wrongly referred to as Wazir Husain by the Viceroy.

young Mohammedan party. One of the leaders of the Mohammedans, the Raja of Mahmudabad, came to see me yesterday, and I asked him whether he considered that Mohamed Ali in his mission to England was representative of his community, and he absolutely repudiated the idea, and told me that he regarded him as a mischievous person, who could only do harm to the Mohammedan cause.'[13]

The Delegation reached London at a time when Parliament was in recess. However, they met as many people as they could and talked not only of the Cawnpore Mosque but of Muslim politics in general. It was during this visit that Mohamed Ali who had graduated from Oxford in 1902 took his degree.

Mohamed Ali addressed a meeting at Essex Hall, London, and spoke on the problems facing Muslims in India. He expressed resentment over atrocities committed in Tripoli, in the Balkans and the sullen indifference of the Foreign Office. He criticised Sir Edward Grey's foreign policy. He met Syed Amir Ali, M.A. Jinnah and other leading Indians including the Aga Khan. While the Raja of Mahmudabad had denounced him at home to Lord Hardinge, Amir Ali had denounced him in England to Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State. His differences with Amir Ali became so serious that the Aga Khan had to intervene to bring about a *rapprochement*.

While the Delegation was in England, the Lt.-Governor of the United Provinces was worrying about its possible attack on him. 'I see Mohamed Ali has hurried off to England,' wrote Sir James Meston to Lord Hardinge. 'They want to get home before me with their garbled Telo. I do most sincerely hope that Lord Crewe will not honour them with an interview . . . if Mohamed Ali were received, then goodbye to any hope of the respectable Mohammedan leaders rallying to oppose him.'[14] Lord Crewe did not disappoint the 'respectable' Mohammedan leaders. He had

13. Ibid., 119, Vol. III, Letter No. 45, p. 120.

14. Ibid., 9 F, No. 569, V to SS, p. 237 (Tel. No. p. 288 dated 14 September).

conveyed an assurance to the Viceroy that he would not receive the Delegation. Lord Hardinge heaved a sigh of relief and gratefully wrote back on 17 September 1913:

'Thank you very much for telegraphing me that Mohamed Ali and Wazir Husain will receive no official encouragement in England. I think that the Mohammedan situation is quieting down and the moment is propitious for bringing forward Mohammedans of moderate opinion. Unfortunately they are none of them as clever as Mohamed Ali, nor is there a single leader amongst them. If the Aga Khan was out here, he might do something to recover his position as leader, but I do not see how a man can ever be a real leader who spends nine months out of the year in London and Paris. If, as seems probable, the Turks are allowed to keep Adrianople, this will have a decidedly pacifying effect. I have talked to all the best Mohammedans who belong to my Council and who are in Simla at present, and I think they are all ready to help to calm the situation. They fully realise its dangers.'[15]

The Government was looking around for a face-saving formula. Lord Hardinge saw the force of Muslim argument. On 11 September he wrote to the Under-Secretary of State for India:

'The Cawnpore visit was a most unfortunate incident, and I am still very much concerned at the attitude of the Mohammedans throughout India. They feel they have real grievances, and although they are keeping quiet at the present, I shudder to think what might happen if some overzealous official were to repeat elsewhere the mistake committed at Cawnpore. Meston has burnt all his boats and is sitting still. I am not harassing him, but I am wondering what he is going to do. I have told him that some solution is necessary in order to soothe Mohammedan feeling, and I am waiting to see what he will suggest. The moderate leaders are very anxious to find a solution which will allay public opinion; but on the other hand agitators, such as Mohamed Ali, have been doing all they can to prevent any sort of a compromise and to keep the sore open. I have written to Lord Crewe by today's mail warning him of Mohamed Ali's departure for England on a self-imposed mission to create trouble with the Mohammedans in England. I trust that he will be given no encouragement as Mahmudabad told me yesterday that he in no sense represents theMohammedan community, of which the moderate section

15. Ibid., 119, Vol. III, Letter No. 47, p. 125.

deprecates his disloyal activity.'[16]

By October a compromise was arrived at.

Lord Hardinge made an announcement on 14 October that the demolished portion of the Mosque would be rebuilt in the same position as before but upon an arcade above the pavement of the new road. All cases against those charged with rioting were withdrawn. Mohamed Ali, paying a tribute to Lord Hardinge at a dinner meeting in Edinburgh, said :

'Those of them who had been in India knew that there was a deity of prestige, which was really nothing more than personal vanity seeking refuge under the larger name of patriotism. And if by such means victories were gained against the people, then it was a victory which in the end was the worst defeat.'[17]

The Delegation left England on 5 December without seeing any Ministers. But if Ministers would not see them, Mohamed Ali said on the eve of his departure, they would have to hear them, both in England and in India. The struggle, he warned, would go on.

In the Seventh Session of the Muslim League, held at Agra on 30-31 December, a debate on a resolution was interrupted. A delegate got up to announce that a special message had been received from Nawab Vaqar-ul-Mulk who was described by the speaker as being 'to Mohammedans what Dadabhai Nauroji was to India'. He had sent a message congratulating the Delegation on their performance in England. The Nawab had sent floral garlands for the two gentlemen, which the President put round their necks amidst loud and continued cheers.[18]

The Muslim League, in its Seventh Session in Agra, adopted a resolution moved by the Aga Khan placing on record its warm appreciation of the 'wise and courageous statesmanship' of Lord Hardinge. Speaking in Persian the Aga Khan said, 'the truth was

16. Ibid., Letter No. 46, V. pp. 123-24.
17. Allah Bakhsh Yusufi, *Maulana Mohamed Ali Jauhar*, pp. 242-43.
18. *Muslim League Documents*, p. 313.

with the Mussalman community,' and it was upheld by the Viceroy who set aside the order of the Provincial Governor. After all justice had been done and the honour of Mussalmans was restored.

Abul Kalam Azad said justice was not obtained from the local Government from whom the public expected it, but from the heights of Simla.[19]

In the concluding part of his address, the President of the League referred to 'the recent happenings in London'. 'You will recognise,' he said, 'how delicate the matter is. The Mussalmans of India have a high regard for Syed Ameer Ali. . . . On the other hand, we have Syed Wazir Hasan and Mr. Mohamed Ali, two of our foremost workers in the interest of Islam. During the comparatively short period of their career, they have proved, beyond the shadow of doubt, their sterling worth and their wholehearted devotion to the Muslim cause. The singleness of purpose with which they have identified themselves with the best interests of Islam has justly earned them high appreciation. . . . It would have been most unfortunate if the differences of opinion which manifested themselves in London should have had any permanent effect.' The prevailing difficulties, it was announced, had been overcome and the London League was again united.[20]

Recalling Cawnpore and the consequences Mohamed Ali wrote in 1919 in Chhindwara:

'It is a well-known fact that in the summer of 1913 I had the misfortune to incur the severe displeasure of Sir James Meston, the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces, over the Cawnpore Mosque affair, and I learnt subsequently that about this time Sir James asked for my deportation, basing the recommendation on two letters, one of which purported to have been addressed to me by some students at the Aligarh College of which I am an Old Boy and Trustee, and the other purporting to be my reply to the first. The contents of these letters were alleged to have indicated some murderous plot or other. I have been informed that these etters were discussed at a meeting of the Executive Council of the Governor-General, and that on a reconsideration of the matter by he latter it was discovered that these letters were clumsy forgeries,

19. Ibid., pp. 321-22. 20. Ibid., pp. 309-10.

and the matter was dropped. I think it fair, however, to state that when I was sent for by Sir Charles Cleveland to Simla on the outbreak of war with Germany, and discussed with him Turkey's position and the possibilities of her intervention which both of us desired to prevent, Sir Charles wished to convince me that the officials were not at all hostile to me, and particularly told me that there was no truth in the rumours about Sir James Meston's recommending my deportation. He denied everything categorically, and even told me that he had been authorised by the Council to do so. After this I would have absolutely discredited these reports were it not for the facts which make me hesitate just a little, that they had reached me on just as reliable authority, and I was told by an official of higher rank than the Director of the Central Intelligence Department, that the Council had never authorised him to deny the truth of my information.'[21]

During Mohamed Ali's stay in England his encounter with Ramsay Macdonald, the Labour leader, was interesting. The two had first met in India in 1912 when Macdonald had come out as a member of the Islington Commission. In the first meeting Macdonald introduced himself as a regular reader of the *Comrade* and warmly praised Mohamed Ali's journalistic talent. But in 1913 Macdonald did not reply to Mohamed Ali who had cabled him from India to take up the Cawnpore case in Parliament. When Mohamed Ali met him in London at the end of 1913, he made a grievance of his reticence. Macdonald replied: 'Oh, Mohamed Ali is such a common name. I could not possibly guess it were you.' Later he apologised and said that the cable was buried under his papers and then he forgot all about it. Dealings with the Labour politicians confirmed Mohamed Ali's opinion that as a class they had little sympathy with the viewpoint of Indian Muslims.[22]

With regard to Turkey Mohamed Ali came to the conclusion the 'she had almost lost the Balkan War before it had been declared, for it was not fought on the battlefields of the Balkans, but

21. Written Statement.

22. Muhammad Sarwar, *Maulana Mohamed Ali ka Europe ka Safar* (Lahore, Idara Adabiyat-i-Nau, 1946), pp. 52-53.

in the editorial sanctums, and on the public platforms, in the pulpits, in the clubs, and in the drawing-rooms of Western Europe. The Turk was unspeakable mainly because he was a Muslim whose religion permitted polygamy and divorce. . . . And so long as he had for Capital the city founded by the first Christian Emperor of Rome, whose name it bore . . . what could be more agreeable than to turn him out bag and baggage ?'[23]

It was during this visit to England that Mohamed Ali was able to prevail upon his namesake, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who was holidaying in London, to join the Muslim League, an event which was later to change the course of history.[24]

THE political atmosphere in India was already becoming ominous. One could hear reverberations of the not too distant echoes of a coming storm, yet below the horizon but travelling fairly fast. Demands of provincial autonomy and non-official majority in the Imperial Legislative Council were becoming louder and more persistent. The Muslim League had revised its Constitution. Terrorist activities had reared their head again. On 25 December 1913, the Viceroy had escaped an attack on his life. Settled facts like the partition of Bengal had been unsettled. Everything was changing. The British Government had no long-term plan or policy; they responded pragmatically to events and lived from day to day treating India as a quasi-permanent trust. There was a premium on flattery and sycophancy and public-spirited men were at a discount. There was no such thing as the freedom of the press or the freedon of expression.

The Muslims of India had secured their separate representation. Mohamed Ali considered it a hateful necessity like divorce, which of all permitted things in Islam is the most hated. He moved the Seventh Session of the Muslim League in Agra to postpone for a year the question of communal representation in self-governing bodies. He believed it was impossible for Hindus and Mussalmans

23. *My Life : A Fragment*, p. 133.
24. G. Allana, *Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah*, p. 74.

to destroy each other. He felt it would be to the ultimate interest of India for the two commnnities to merge together. The question was not whether Muslims would renounce what they had got. The plea was to postpone the discussion for a year. Mr Muhammad Ali Jinnah supported Mohamed Ali, but his proposal was defeated. He was able to muster only forty votes, while eighty-nine votes were cast against him—the dawn of a common Indian nationality was nowhere in sight.

The Muslim world outside India was writhing with pain and agony. The Italian armies had invaded Tripoli (Libya). The European powers watched on and did nothing to stop this unwarranted aggression. They made sure, however, that the Turco-Italian War was not waged on European soil. The victories of the Balkan States were acclaimed by some as a triumph of the Cross over the Crescent. Even the Liberal Prime Minister of Great Britain, in complete disregard of the feelings of seventy million Muslim subjects of the King-Emperor of India, rejoiced at the fall of Salonica on the ground of its having been the gate through which Christianity had entered Europe. The atrocities perpetrated upon innocent and unarmed men and wowen were excused by His Britannic Majesty's Foreign Secretary on the ground that they had been committed by irregular bands. For the first time in history a section of the European press openly proclaimed that Turks had no right to remain in Europe. The Balkan States demanded not only the territories they had conquered but even cities and islands which they had not succeeded in capturing. And in this demand they were supported by the Great Powers of Europe.

Russia had succeeded in obtaining practical control of Northern Persia. It seemed that the Muslim States in Asia would be ultimately swallowed up. The Inquisition of Spain had not been forgotten by Muslims who shuddered to think of the prospects in store for them. The lesson to be learnt from this crisis was self-reliance, unity and strength.

The Muslim League deplored the unjust war declared by the

Allies against the Turkish peoples and deeply regretted the attitude of Christian Europe. In another resolution it urged the British Government to persuade Russia to evacuate Northern Persia and leave the Persian people to work out their own salvation without foreign intervention.[25]

Before the year ran out the Balkan War ended. All that the Indian Muslims asked England, as the sovereign power holding sway over seventy million Muslims in India, was to help obtain a fair and just treatment for Turkey in the councils in Europe. Mr Asquith, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, declared that the Concert of Europe could not possibly deprive the victorious party of securing the fruits of their victory. Were the Muslims of India to be blamed, then, if they felt that England was associated with other European powers in enforcing a policy that if the Turks won they would not be allowed to retain any territory belonging to any of the Balkan Allies, but if the Balkan Allies won a victory, they would be permitted to keep the European territory of Turkey?

In early March 1914, a Deputation of Muslims waited on Lord Hardinge. The address on behalf of eighty-four signatories was drafted by Mohamed Ali. At this time the troubles of Morocco, Tripoli, Persia and Macedonia were over. The Cawnpore affair had already occurred and had been partially settled. What was the Viceroy's assessment of the loyalty of Muslims and their disaffection? Lord Hardinge in the course of his reply to the Muslim Deputation said:

'There is no doubt that Mohammadan sentiment has been greatly stirred by recent events outside India, and that for a time a restless spirit prevailed which might have been interpreted by those who regarded merely the troubled surface of the water as a dangerous portent, but which those who could see below the surface were well aware betrayed no real antagonism between Government and your community. It is true that feelings have been sore, that here and there this has found expression in bitter or heated words, which it would have been better to have left unsaid. And it is true, unfortunately, that writers in the English and foreign press have

25. *Muslim League Documents*, pp. 279-80.

been misled by such expression and, owing to a merely superficial comprehension of the Mohammadan train of thought, have misrepresented the attitude of your community and attributed to them actions and thoughts which those who know you well can only regard as a deep misunderstanding. I can well sympathise with your feelings of resentment at aspersions that have been cast upon you and your people as a whole, but I can only assure you that I and my Government have never doubted the unswerving loyalty which we know quite well to be one of the noblest and most sacred traditions of your community.'[26]

THE outbreak of war in August 1914 called forth an outburst of loyal sentiments among all the political classes. Mohamed Ali wrote, 'All truly loyal people have closed the chapter of civic controversy with the officials and into that book they are likely to look no more. Whatever our grievances, whatever reforms we desire, everything must wait for a more seasonable occasion. Even if the Government were to concede to us all that we ever desired or dreamt, if, for instance, the Moslem University were offered to us on our own terms, or the Press Act repeal were to be announced, or even if Self-Government were to be conceded to us, we would humbly tell Government this is no time for it, and we must for the present decline such concessions with thanks. Concessions are asked for and accepted in peace. We are not Russian Poles. We need no bribes!'[27]

There was a general cessation of embarrassing activity and a general support for war measures in the country. In this atmosphere of goodwill, 1,200,000 men, 800,000 of whom were combatants, were recruited. A sum of £100 million was given outright to Britain for the prosecution of war and £20-30 million contributed annually. India was denuded of both troops and officials so that at one time only 15,000 British troops remained in the country. But nobody thought of taking advantage of the weakness of Britain at this hour.[28]

Lord Hardinge reported to his Government in the middle of

26. Written Statement, p. 28. 27. *Writings and Speeches*, I, 217.
28. *The Oxford History*, p. 335.

October 1914:

'The tone of the press in this country is very satisfactory with the exception of two papers, one edited by Mohamed Ali and the other by Zafar Ali. Until Zafar Ali returned his paper was quite satisfactory, but now it is as bad as it possibly could be. He manages successfully to avoid falling within the clutches of the Press Act, but his is a poisonous paper and is doing a lot of harm. Happily, he has arrived in India since the promulgation of the Ordinance for the ingress of Indians, and O'Dwyer is going to deal with him sending him to his village in some obscure part of the Punjab, and there keeping him under surveillance for the time being. It is quite an ingenious way of dealing with him, and within the law. Mohamed Ali is rather different. His paper, the *Comrade*, is also very bad in tone. He is a subject of the native state of Rampur, and I am making enquiries as to whether it would not be possible to send him to his own state, and when once there, I could count on the Nawab looking after him. The Nawab would probably not make his stay over-pleasant.'[29]

The reason why Lord Hardinge was thinking of making life not 'over-pleasant' for Mohamed Ali was an article that appeared on 26 September in the *Comrade*. *The Times* of London, like the rest of the British press, was cajoling, threatening and intimidating Turkey into jumping in the fray on the side of the Allies. *The Times* had, in an editorial entitled 'The Choice of Turks,' left little choice to Turkey. She had only two alternative—support the Allies or be considered an enemy. Neutrality would be construed as support of Germany. Mohamed Ali whose heart beat in unison with the Turks considered that Turkey, in her own interest, should maintain the strictest neutrality.

The Balkan War had ended barely a year before the First World War began. In 1913, in less than a year European Turkey had been reduced to a sixth of its area and to less than a third of its population. It had lost 50,000 sq. miles of its territory and four and a quarter million people. It desperately needed peace. Mohamed Ali, therefore, cautioned Turkey that before making

29. H.P. 120, Vol. IV, Letter No. 52, V to SS, pp. 165, 166, dated 15 October 1914.

her choice she should carefully weigh all the implications and make certain that before entering into a quarrel 'they must not come out of it till the claims of both honour and self-interest are satisfied'. They should fight only their own battles and not those of another : Mohamed Ali advised that if Turkey could not remain neutral let her make sure that in this terrible business of war, 'the quarrel is her own'.

He had in private given this advice to Talaat Bey, and through him to Prince Said Halim and Damad Enver Pasha. He now reiterated it forcefully in an editorial in the *Comrade* at a time when the war was nearly two months old. Turkey, he emphasised, must exercise her own judgment and surrender it to none. 'If she chooses badly the suffering will be entirely hers, though the sorrow will be ours also.'

Mohamed Ali wrote in reply to *The Times* :

> 'This is not the time to apportion praise or blame. . . . Whosoever may have been responsible for the present state of Anglo-Turkish relations, we desire that instead of there being no trace of a possibility of Turkey throwing in her lot with the English there should at least be no trace of the possibility of her throwing in her lot with the enemies of England.'[30]

The self-interest of Turkey was to be the overriding consideration in the choice to enter war. She needed peace and if war could mean salvaging her honour and her territory lost during the Balkan War, it might perhaps make some sense to make the sacrifice demanded of a country already impoverished by war, crushed by defeat, harassed by civil strife and now being instigated by some foreign powers to help pull their chestnuts out of the fire.

The Times of London had suggested, as a reason of Turkey's vacillation, that she was hankering after Salonika. Retorted Mohamed Ali in his editorial in the *Comrade* : 'But what is Salonika to England or England to Salonika that she should care a burnt match for it? Nothing, at any rate, that the Musalmans

30. *Writings and Speeches*, I, 185.

can appreciate whether in Beirut or Bengal.' And why should they not hanker after Salonika? he asked. 'Yes, why not? Are not the Turks men? Do they not have feelings and sensibilities as other men? . . . Does not Salonika call the Turks as Strassburg has been calling the French? Does it not flash across the dividing land and sea the never changing message: "I am Salonika. I am Islam—the Unity of your Allah, the Truth of His Messenger. I am a signal. I wait"? '

Lord Hardinge wrote to the Secretary of State on 21 October 1914: 'There still appears to be considerable doubt as to the attitude of Turkey, happily there is none as regards the attitude of the Indian Mohammedans.' He added, however, that 'unfortunately some Mohammedan papers were trying to stir up trouble. . . . I am enquiring whether the security of the *Comrade* cannot be confiscated. I am confident that no one will object to strong measures being taken during the course of the war.'[31] A week latter the Viceroy reported:

'The tone of the *Comrade* continues to be extremely bad, and our legal advisers tell us that there is sufficient ground to forfeit Mohamed Ali's security.'[32]

The advice was accepted. The security was forfeited, and it soon led to the closure of the *Comrade* which had indeed created a stir in the life of the Indian Muslims since January 1911.

The story of this famous article in the history of Indian journalism is best told in the words of the author:[33]

'When the Government ordered the forfeiture of the security of my Press, I desired to bring the issue before a Court with the ongest and most widely credited traditions of judicial independence, namely, the High Court at Calcutta, and this was, I believed, possible because the order of forfeiture extended to every copy of that issue "wherever found". I consulted Mr. Eardley Norton, the counsel in the earlier Pamphlet case, and he agreed with me that

31. H.P. 120, Vol. IV, V to SS, Letter No. 53, p. 167.
32. Ibid., Letter No. 55, p. 171, dated 29 October 1914.
33. Written Statement, p. 29.

the issue could be raised in Calcutta. More than that, he found that the article so arbitrarily condemned contained nothing that it was alleged by Government to contain, and had no undesirable tendency, and with characteristic generosity he once more took up the brief without fee or retainer. As in the previous case, my solicitor, the Hon'ble Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, now Member of the Secretary of State's Council, who also took up the work on both occasions with the same generosity, that is, entirely free of cost to myself, advised me to consult that eminent Indian lawyer, Sir S.P. Sinha, who had the additional merit of having been the Law Member of the Government of India when the Press Bill was passed into law. The latter agreed with Mr. Norton as regards the perfect propriety of the condemned article, but believed that the effect of the order of forfeiture was confined to the territorial jurisdiction of the local Government of Delhi, and the expression "wherever found" connoted "wherever found within those territorial limits". He, therefore, feared that the Calcutta High Court would throw out the application we proposed to present to it on the ground of absence of jurisdiction, and that was exactly what occurred. Nevertheless, Sir S.P. Sinha advised me to take the case to the Punjab Chief Court, not with any hope of success there, but with perfect certainty that on appeal the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council would reverse the order against me. I followed his advice precisely for the purpose suggested by him, and when, as we had both feared, the Punjab Court threw out the application, and made certain unjudicial strictures on my personal character into the bargain, I hurried to Bombay to consult the Hon'ble Mr. Jinnah about the Privy Council appeal. Mr. Jinnah read the article as well as th judgment, and was so greatly fascinated by the legal and politica possibilities of the case that he took a promise from me that i he decided to go to England that summer as usual in spite of the difficulties and risks of the journey due to the war, I would not alter my decision to give the brief to him and to no one else. Within a few weeks of this, however, I was interned.

'It was after the publication of this article that I received a wire from Sir Charles Cleveland, the Director of the Criminal Intelligence Department, requesting me to come over to Simla, as he explained he was unavoidably detained there and could not come to see me. When I arrived there I called on Sir Charles and broke my fast in his rooms, and over tea we discussed this article. Sir Charles at first complained that I had made the wounds of Moslem India green by referring to past incidents, but readily accepted the assurance that I desired to impress upon my readers, whom I knew better than Sir Charles, or any other non-Moslem and European, that in urging them to demonstrate their genuine loyalty at this supreme crisis in the history of England, I had

ignored no single consideration to the contrary that could occur to the enemies of England with which to attempt them, as they subsequently did, but that irrespective of all these considerations, or rather because we have carefully weighed them all against the one supreme consideration, "our need of England," and "found her good exceeding by a very great deal her evil," we must remain loyal. The same explanation was given on my return to Delhi to Mr. Hailey and was equally readily accepted.

'But I anticipate—Sir Charles Cleveland expressed to me British apprehensions that Turkey may be induced by Germany to join against England, and was greatly pleased to hear that after the Ramzan I intended to hold public meetings to entreat Turkey to remain neutral. But he had some misgivings about the holding of such meetings, and suggested that I might send a cable to Turkish Ministers, for the prompt despatch of which he would arrange with the British authorities. I accepted this, and told him that, since Dr. Ansari was also then in Simla, perhaps he too would join his entreaties to mine. This pleased him still more, and when Dr. Ansari expressed his willingness, we went to Sir Charles Cleveland's Office, and I drafted the following cablegram which Sir Charles Cleveland promised to despatch at his cost, since I had no idea in coming to Simla that I shall be sending expensive cables to Turkey, and had not brought enough money. This was the cable and it was published in the last issue of the *Comrade* which ended its career on the 7th November, 1914:

'"His Excellency Talaat Bey, Minister of the Interior, Constantinople. Having most carefully considered the situation, we emphatically believe it would be disastrous for Turkey and the entire Moslem world if Turkey does not maintain the strictest neutrality. We entreat you think a thousand times before launching into war. In case of war between Turkey and England, our condition also will be extremely sad. Please convey this our respectful and earnest message to Sadr-i-Azam (Grand Vazir) and Enver Pasha.—Ansari, Mohamed Ali."

'The confiscation of the security of my press for publishing "The Choice of the Turks," which was quoted with the utmost approval even by such Tory organs as *The Morning Post* and *The Daily Telegraph* of London, prompted *The New Statesman* to write a long leading article, denouncing the foreiture under the ironic title "Encouraging Mohammadan Loyalty". What title *The New Statesman* must have felt inclined to give to any expression of its amazement on my subsequent internment I cannot even conceive.'[34]

MOHAMED ALI, a moderate leader, had been driven into opposi-

34. Written Statement.

tion by the senseless policies of Government. In 1919 Mohamed Ali was to recall this with some regret:

'I had received such education as I was equipped with for my task at Aligarh, where I had been fortunate enough to have lived in the Golden Age of the College from 1890 to 1898, under the guidance of an Englishman of great fascination and generous instincts, the late Theodore Beck, and watched over from the clouds, so to speak, by the ever-vigilant presiding genius of the place, the late Syed Ahmad Khan. I had continued this for another four years by migrating, after obtaining the degree of the Allahabad University, to Oxford, not inaptly called "the home of lost causes," where I joined a small but distinguished foundation associated with the names of Wesley, and more recently with those of Mark Pattison and John Morley. Such bias as I had was entirely in favour of the British people, and since I was no studious recluse, but enjoyed participation in the lusty activities of my comrades at my own college and at many others, I had acquired considerable affection for them, which was I believe reciprocated. If it is believed that I am a determined Anglophobe, those who believe this may perhaps profitably spend a little time in cogitating on the circumstances that could have so rapidly altered such an Anglophile as myself, though I may add that this belief is wholly erroneous.'[35]

By March 1915, the Viceroy was already talking of evidence of a conspiracy against British rule in India. The mood in the country had altered from enthusiasm at the outbreak of the First World War to one of critical impatience, restlessness and a desire for change. An early sign of discontent was the revolutionary activity in Bengal and the *Ghadr* party activities in the Punjab. Its leader Raja Mahendra Pratab went to Berlin to foment a Muslim rising from Kabul, but nothing came out of the efforts which were more in the nature of a disturbance than a danger. In a memorandum drawn up by the Home Department and enclosed with a letter dated 3 March 1915, from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, it was reported that:

'The pan-Islamic party has naturally been upset by the war with

35. Written Statement, p. 49.

Turkey, and it has been reported that they are working with the Sikh agitators in the Punjab. It is known that the President of the Khuddam-i-Kaba Society (founded by Maulana Shaukat Ali) opposed a movement to issue a *fatwa* favourable to the British Government on the subject of the war; the Punjab Government has had to restrict to his native village, Zafar Ali, Editor of the *Zamindar*; a section of the Mohammedan press, noticeably Mohamed Ali of the *Comrade* and *Hamdard*, has been conspicuous for pro-German and pro-Turkish writing. Deliberate attempts have been made to preach *Jehad*, and a curious incident was the disappearance recently of 15 Mohammedan students from various Lahore colleges, of whom 13 have been traced to a Wahabi Colony across the frontier.'[36]

In October 1914, Lord Hardinge had hinted at arranging a 'not too over-pleasant' stay for Mohamed Ali in Rampur. He did not forget his promise. Mohamed Ali was now a harassed man. The forfeiture of the security of the *Comrade*, followed by similar action in regard to *Hamdard*; the litigation in the High Courts of Calcutta and Lahore and the constant travels it involved, and preoccupation with public affairs in a spirit of intense commitment—all this had played havoc with his health. In early 1915, therefore, he went to Rampur for rest leaving the management of his financial affairs in Delhi to his brother, Shaukat Ali. Soon after his arrival in Rampur, however, he found that Meston, the Lt.-Governor of the United Provinces, who had a score to settle with Mohamed Ali after the Cawnpore Mosque incident, had arranged with the Nawab of Rampur for his 'internment' there. When Mohamed Ali's health deteriorated the Nawab allowed him to go to the hills. On arrival in Delhi on his way to Mussoorie, where he was going with his Medical Adviser and friend, Dr M.A. Ansari, Mohamed Ali was served with internment orders by the Government of India.

Lord Hardinge informed his Government on 27 May 1915:[37]

'We have found it necessary to intern Mohamed Ali, the editor

36. H.P. 121, Vol. V, Letter No. 13 (a).
37. Ibid., Letter No. 31, p. 121.

of the *Comrade* and the *Hamdard*, and his brother Shaukat Ali in a village about eight miles from Delhi. I came to the conclusion that it was high time something was done. A leading Mohammedan member of my Legislative Council told me very privately that he knew for a fact that Shaukat Ali was in correspondence with people in Afghanistan encouraging them to rise in *Jehad* against us, while Mohamed Ali leaves trouble behind him wherever he goes. Recently, he was in Lahore and addressed the students in the Medical College, the result being that a few days later, 14 or 15 medical students went off to Afghanistan nominally to raise the tribes against us. Mohamed Ali also went to Aligarh College and created trouble, the result being that the Lt.-Governors of the Punjab and the United Provinces asked the Government of India to prevent these two agitators from entering their provinces. This was, in my opinion, sufficient reason for their internment, which after all is not a great hardship, since they are permitted to lead the ordinary life, and to see all their friends and correspondents provided they do not leave the village. The local Mohammedans of Delhi held meetings to protest against the action of the Government but the respectable element kept aloof. . . .'

The place where the Ali Brothers, as they came to be called, were interned on 15 May 1915 was a small village near Delhi called Mehrauli, the site of the famous Qutub Minar. It was hardly a few miles away from the capital. The people marked their protest by thronging in this small village to see their heroes. In Mohamed Ali's own words, '. . . every day cart-loads of visitors from Delhi [came] to see us and to offer us their sympathies and an endless supply of fruits. . . . Our kitchen though maintained on a very modest scale began to find itself overworked for we could not think of sending away our visitors without a meal, and it was not unusual after a few days to have three or four meals cooked one after another without any interruption to provide a long succession of breakfasts beginning at ten and ending at two or even later. Evidently our visitors soon realised this, for soon afterwards we began to get by the morning's post a short note intimating that a party of friends would be visiting us in the forenoon or the afternoon and that we should not order any meals at all! For on top of the four wheelers that used to bring the pilgrims would be huge *degs* or vats containing curries and pilaff and sweet rice and

the local bakeries had already been asked to supply "hot from the oven" the "Sheermals" or milk-bread for which Qutub Sahib had still a great reputation. Thus it turned out that our hermitage was even more crowded than our houses at Delhi where at all times of the day, and almost of the night as well, we used to have a succession of visitors.'[38]

There was no rest for Mohamed Ali in his exile. There was even less for Lord Hardinge who realised that he had committed a mistake in highlighting public attention on Mohamed Ali. The Brothers were whisked away to Lansdowne, a small hill station near Mussoorie which had no civil population but quartered a military garrison. Mohamed Ali was allowed Rs 250 a month as subsistence while Shaukat received Rs 100 per month. No man, much less a family, could subsist on this petty allowance. Bit by bit, the Brothers were forced to sell all their landed property. There was a grim humour in this situation. The property earned by the grandfather for assisting the British during the Mutiny was lost by the grandsons sixty years later to prevent them from assisting the enemies of the British !

In losing almost all else Mohamed Ali had at long last found peace in this forced retirement from public life. In the inaccessible solitude of Lansdowne the small Muslim population soon discovered that the new arrivals were among the founders of the 'Servants of Ka'ba Society'. They began to come to them for enlistment as members. The Government was perturbed. This time they hit upon Chhindwara in the Central Provinces, remote from every place. Both at Lansdowne where Mohamed Ali stayed only five months, and at Chhindwara, where he passed three and a half years, he had ample leisure and peace to devote to reading, thinking and a bit of writing.

After the closure of *Hamdard* and *Comrade*, and the internment of Ali Brothers Lord Hardinge gleefully informed his Government on 22 October 1915 :

38. *My Life : A Fragment*, p. 58.

'The control which we have exercised over the press under the Defence of India Act has had an admirable effect, and I certainly congratulate myself that after I had interned Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali of the *Comrade* [what had Shaukat Ali to do with *Comrade*—one does not know] all Mohammedan agitation ceased almost simultaneously.'[39]

Commenting upon the state of internal security, a day earlier, the Viceroy assured the Secretary of State:

'I am fairly satisfied with the general situation. . . . When the Defence of India Act was introduced . . . I assured the Council that it would be put into force only with great care . . . we have been able to intern certain individuals doing a good deal of mischief, and whom it was inadvisable to bring up before a Special Tribunal. . . . The number interned under the Act is very small. Outside Bengal, only three have been interned, viz., Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali in the United Provinces and a dangerous man sent away from Peshawar to the Central Provinces. There has been no outcry against any of these internments except in one or two Mohammedan papers to which no importance need be attached. The internment of Mohamed Ali has had the effect of reducing the circulation of his mischievous paper, the *Hamdard*, and it is easy to foresee that within a few weeks time it will cease publication altogether. We are treating these men well, as they are in hill station and we give them a maintenance-allowance.'[40]

Lord Hardinge did not tell the Secretary of State that Mohamed Ali's maintenance allowance was a princely £4 a week that a typist would disdain to accept in London, and Shaukat Ali was granted the royal sum of £1-10-0 a week. He was a little more honest, however, in his despatch to the Under Secretary of State in whom he confided that 'the Mohammedans are quiescent but sulky. They are watching affairs in the Dardanelles, and I wish the whole question of Constantinople could be settled rather more quickly than seems probable.' He also told him that the 'moderate Mohammedans' were very pleased at the action taken against Mohamed Ali.[41]

39. H.P. 121, Vol. V, Letter No. 60, p. 246.
40. Ibid., Letter No. 42, p. 171.
41. Ibid., letter No. 35, p. 146, dated 26 June 1915.

Chapter Five

INTERNMENT AND IMPRISONMENT

[1915–1919]

Joint Congress-League Session at Lucknow, 1916—The Lucknow Pact, 1916—Demand for Mohamed Ali's Release—Election in absentia as President of Muslim League, 1917—Montagu's Announcement on Indian Policy, 20 August 1917—Rumour of Release and the Story of the Forged Letters, 1918—Appointment of Enquiry Committee to Examine Question of Release, November 1918—Charges against Mohamed Ali and Gandhi's Comment—Written Statement Presented to Enquiry Committee, December 1918—Recommendation of Enquiry Committee to release Mohamed Ali Rejected by Government—Mohamed Ali's 'Intemperate' Letter to the Viceroy, April 1919—The Tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh, April 1919—Removal from Chhindwara to Beitul Jail, June 1919—Forced Rest and Reflection, May 1915-December 1919—Studies in Jail—Release at last, 28 December 1919—Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms or The Government of India Act of 1919

WHILE Mohamed Ali was under detention, India was showing some signs of change. The tempo of events had quickened. In 1915, Gokhale, 'the wisest and ablest of the moderates,'[1] died at the early age of forty-nine. In 1916, Tilak emerged from his retirement as the leader of the extremists in the Congress. He joined forces with Mrs Annie Besant and her Home Rule League, persuaded the Muslim League to support his programme in the agreement known as the Lucknow Pact, and captured the Lucknow Congress at the close of the year. Henceforward the once formidable 'moderates' receded into the background—they were soon to dissolve into a number of generals without any followers.

The Lucknow Pact was achieved by major concessions on both

1. *The Oxford History*, p. 339.

sides. The spirit of discord and mutual recrimination had been discarded by both Hindus and Muslims. The Congress conceded separate Muslim electorates; it even acquiesced in their introduction in the Punjab and the Central Provinces where they had not existed before. Seats on the Councils were allotted on a generous scale. Muslim strength at the Centre was increased. The Muslims, for their part, were to surrender the additional advantage they had obtained in 1909 of also voting in general constituencies. A safeguard, a notable departure from the doctrine of 'majority rule,' was provided to ensure that no bill or resolution affecting a community should be proceeded with if three-fourths of the representatives of that community were opposed to it. The cardinal points of the Congress-League Scheme, as it was called, may be summarised as follows:[2]

(1) The Provinces should be freed as much as possible from Central control in administration and finance.

(2) Four-fifths of the Central and Provincial Legislative Councils should be elected, and one-fifth nominated.

(3) Not less than half the members of the Central and Provincial Governments should be elected by the elected members of their respective Legislative Councils.

(4) The Governments, Central and Provincial, should be bound to act in accordance with resolutions passed by their Legislative Councils unless they were vetoed by the Governor-General or Governors in Council, and, in that event, if the resolutions were passed again after an interval of not less than one year, it should in any case be put into effect.

(5) The Central Legislative Council should have 'no power to interfere with the Government of India's direction of the military affairs and the foreign and political rela-

2. Sir Reginald Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem in India*. For details of the reform scheme adopted by the Muslim League Reform Committee and the All-India Congress Committee, see pp. 392-97 in *Muslim League Documents* edited by Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Muslim League Documents*, pp. 392-97.

tions of India, including the declaration of war, the making of peace and the entering into treaties'.

(6) The relations of the Secretary of State with the Government of India should be similar to those of the Colonial Secretary with the Governments of the Dominions, and India should have an equal status with that of the Dominions in any body concerned with imperial affairs.

The scheme had only one defect—it never materialised.

The combined meeting of the Congress and the League at Lucknow in 1916 was a momentous event in the history of India. How far the British Government appreciated the implications of this development can perhaps be judged by the following extracts from a confidential report prepared by the Home Department of the United Provinces Government:

'The letter urging sobriety of speech, which the Lt. Governor caused to be addressed to the Chairman of the Congress, undoubtedly had a steadying effect. It strengthened the hands of the more moderate politicians . . . it is a matter for congratulation that the Congress concluded its deliberations without any untoward incident and that no speeches were delivered on which Government will find it necessary to take punitive action.'[3]

Referring to Tilak's capture of the Lucknow Congress, the report reluctantly concedes that, although there was marked moderation on the surface, it was admitted on all hands that the extremist party had made a deep impression.

The intelligence report refers significantly to the mood of the moment which led to several draft resolutions being altered to eliminate strong expressions of loyalty.

The meetings of the Muslim League, it was pointed out with some sense of satisfaction, were characterised by a 'rather better tone' than those of the Congress, though the League had now definitely associated itself with the demand for home rule advanced by the Congress. The fortnightly report gives credit to the Muslim

3. F.R. Home Pol., January 1917, No. 45 D, Lucknow Secretariat, Archives.

League whose attitude 'on the pan-Islamic question and foreign politics generally was studiously correct'.

The importance of the *rapprochement* between Hindus and Muslims is minimised by pointing out the protest of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha. It is also made out that the Muslim League Session which endorsed the agreement was not representative of Indian Muslims because 'Mian Muhammad Shafi's branch of the League in the Punjab was disaffiliated. . . . Apart from the President Mr. Jinnah, there were very few delegates from Bombay. Madras was almost entirely unrepresented and the delegates from Bengal were few. Important sections in the United Provinces were quite unrepresented.'[4]

In the Eighth Muslim League Session at Bombay towards the end of December 1915, references were made to Mohamed Ali as 'one of the principal founders of our League'. No Indian community, it was stated, had its loyalty put to a greater test than the Muslims whose leaders had been interned without the Government taking the trouble to give reasons for internment.

In 1916, the Muslim League in its session at Lucknow, demanded the release of Mohamed Ali and his brother. Some of the most distinguished and popular leaders, it was said, had been deprived of their liberty:

> 'No definite charges have been brought against them, there has been no public trial for any known offence under the law, and they have been given no opportunity to explain the grounds on which the order for their internment may have been based. It is, therefore, no fault of the people if they regard these gentlemen as innocent victims of some cruel misunderstanding or suspicion.'

References were made to: 'the great hold that Mr. Mohamed Ali has on the esteem and affections of his people.' It was pointed out that

> 'within his comparatively short but crowded career as a devoted

4. U.P. Confidential Fortnightly Report on the Lucknow Congress of 1916. F.R. Home Pol., January 1917, No. 45 D, Lucknow Secretariat, Archives.

servant of his community he has won his way to the heart of Muslim India. The feeling for him and his brother is one of deep sorrow and sympathy, and if this feeling has not found an organized public expression, it is because the Muslim community has exercised wonderful self-restraint, and has refrained from embarrasing the Government at such a time as this.'[5]

In 1917, Mrs Annie Besant, President of the Home Rule League, saw Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy of India, to press for Mohamed Ali's release, but he was not disposed to budge over this question. Writing to the Secretary of State on 18 October 1917, the Viceroy stated:

'During my absence Mrs. Besant has been visiting Simla—I did not think it necessary to forgo my holiday to see the old lady,—and saw Vincent and Du Boulay. The chief object of her visit was to negotiate the release of Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali. Many of us came to the investigation of the case against them with an open mind; but when the causes of their internment were shown, we felt from every point of view it was undesirable to release them. Vincent made this quite clear to Mrs. Besant, but she will not take "No" for an answer and asked to see me at Delhi on my return from Karachi. I propose to see her and quite civilly but firmly give her the same reply.'[6]

Public meetings were held all over the country denouncing Mohamed Ali's internment as wholly unwarranted and completely unjustified. But the Government persisted in defying public opinion 'in a spirit of autocratic high-handedness of which even the Russian Czar would possibly have been ashamed.'[7]

The atmosphere at the All-India Muslim League session held in Calcutta in December 1917 is better imagined than described. The President-elect is absent. The presidential chair is not occupied by anyone, only a large portrait of Mohamed Ali rests there. On the dais, among others, is the aged, old and infirm mother of Mohamed Ali. There are tears in the eyes of the delegates. The vacant presidential chair eloquently expresses the feelings of

5. *Muslim League Documents*, p. 370.
6. Chelmsford to Montagu, Letter No. 38, p. 290.
7. *Muslim League Documents*, p. 401.

Muslim India. The Chairman of the Reception Committee deepens this sense of gloom by his moving speech. In welcoming the delegates, he says :

'I grieve for the absence of Mr. Mohamed Ali, not merely because he was our president-elect, but also because he has all along been one of the sturdiest champions of the Muslim cause in India. I grieve for Mr. Mohamed Ali, for I feel that his absence from the presidential chair today is the result of an act of despotism and unreasoning autocracy on the part of our rulers, which has cast a slur upon the fair name of British rule in India. I grieve for Mr. Mohamed Ali, because at a moment when the most vital questions of constitutional reform are being discussed from all points of view, his absence from our midst has been the greatest possible disaster to Muslim interests. I grieve for Mr. Mohamed Ali, because he was one of the most trusted and most intrepid of our leaders, and we can ill-afford to be deprived of his sane counsel and sober guidance at this crisis in the history of our community and our country. I grieve for Mr. Mohamed Ali, because I firmly believe that he has fallen a victim to misrepresentations and mischievous reports of the Criminal Intelligence Department, for no other reason than being a true Mussalman and a fearless exponent of the progressive ideals of Islam. I grieve for Mr. Mohamed Ali, because his absence from our midst today is a studied insult to the feelings and sentiments of the loyal Mussalmans of India. I grieve for Mr. Mohamed Ali, because the refusal of the Government to release him in spite of our repeated prayers and entreaties is an act of unparalleled high-handedness on the part of our rulers, which is sure to rouse discontent amongst the peaceful members of our community in India. I grieve for Mr. Mohamed Ali, for I feel that he is at the present moment suffering an unjustifiable and unmerited incarceration, whereas the crown of glory should have adorned his head as a reward for his unselfish labours on behalf of his community and his country.'[8]

THE emergence of the Lucknow Pact at the end of 1916 lent strength to the forces of Indian nationalism. Just at that time Lloyd George succeeded Asquith as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. It was his powerful War Cabinet, with such leading figures as Lord Curzon, Lord Milner and Mr Balfour in its ranks, that approved and issued the announcement of 20 August 1917. The

8. Ibid., pp. 400-01.

Secretary of State for India, speaking in the House of Commons, said :[9]

'The Government of India have for some time been urging that a statement should be made in regard to Indian policy, and I am glad to have the opportunity of meeting their wishes. The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible, and that it is of the highest importance, as a preliminary to considering what these steps should be, that there should be a free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at home and India. His Majesty's Government have accordingly decided, with His Majesty's approval, that I should accept the Viceroy's invitation to proceed to India to discuss these matters with the Viceroy and the Government of India, to consider with the Viceroy the views of local governments, and to receive with him the suggestions of representative bodies and others.

'I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be the judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.

'Ample opportunity will be afforded for public discussion of the proposals, which will be submitted in dew course to Parliament.'

The novelty of the announcement lay in the second part of it. It was the first time that the goal of British policy was officially defined and the proposed method of attaining it was precisely the one which had been so persistently rejected in the past. It was disclosed after his death by the biographer of Lord Curzon that he had inserted the words 'responsible government' in the draft of the Declaration in the belief that they had rather vague and loose meaning. He was greatly perturbed, it is recorded, to find

9. 97 H. C. Deb. 5 s. Columns 1695-98, 20 August 1917.

that he had committed himself to the very form of Government in India against which, less than ten years ago, he had warned Lord Morley ![10]

Montagu came to India in November 1917 and visited the principal cities. His tour, the first of its kind by a Secretary of State for India, lasted six months. He ordered the release of Mrs Besant, President of the Home Rule League, and called upon Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Governor of the Punjab, to tender a public apology for a particularly nasty utterance against the politicians.

THE first intimation that Mohamed Ali ever received that his release was under consideration came in September 1917, in the following telegram from Mr B. G. Horniman, Editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, to Mohamed Ali at Chhindwara:

'Please let us know your intentions regarding Government's offer release. Suggest feasible to give assurance refrain from unconstitutional violent methods, not merely for remainder of war but for all eternity. Government's offer is ungracious, but there is hope for country if you avail yourselves of it. Of course do not wish to suggest anything involving misconstruction as admission of wrong methods in the past. Umar and others have seen this and we wish only country's and your good. Horniman.'

Until then no offer had been received from the Government; nor did he know at the time the terms of the Government reply to Mr Jinnah's question regarding the release of Mrs Besant and her two lieutenants, and to his supplementary question regarding Mohamed Ali, in the Imperial Legislative Council on 5 September 1917. Soon after receiving this telegram, the following reply was forwarded by Mohamed Ali to the Censor with a view to obtaining his sanction for transmission, as required by the terms of internment:

'Your telegram. Thanks. We have received no offer ourselves. Never unconstitutional or violent, we have always been God-fearing Moslems and law-abiding lovers of our country, and always desired and hope to be. We place our people's fullest free-

10. Lord Ronaldshay (Zetland), *Life of Curzon* (London, 1928), ii, Chap. x.

dom above our own, and confident that our friends would never wish us to prejudice that, we always welcome their counsel. But we cannot feel joy at our own release if God-fearing and valiant patriots like Mrs. Besant, Hasrat, Azad and Abdul Wali Khan here at Betul are not also released. Shaukat Ali. Mohamed Ali.'

This telegram was, however, referred by the Censor to the Local Administration, which, after some days, refused to permit its transmission. In the meantime the following telegram was actually despatched to Mr Horniman on 7 September with the Censor's sanction :

'Your telegram. Thanks. Our reply referred by Censor to Government. Place full reliance on friends. Shaukat Ali. Mohamed Ali.'

On the morning of 7 September, however, a significant incident took place. Mr Abdul Majid, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Criminal Intelligence Department), who had arrived from Simla, called on the Ali Brothers, and, under instructions from Sir Charles Cleveland, Director of the C.I.D., showed to them the form of an undertaking initialled by Sir Charles Cleveland, which the latter desired them to give. It ran as follows:

Undertaking. 'I shall abstain during the remainder of the war from doing, writing or saying anything intended or reasonably likely to encourage of assist the enemies of the King-Emperor. I shall also abstain from doing, writing or saying anything intended or reasonably likely to be construed as an attack upon the allies and friends of the King Emperor. I also promise to abstain from any violent or unconstitutional agitation which is likely to affect the public safety.'

Explanation. 'The abstentions promised above are not intended to cause me to refrain from participation in politics within constitutional limits.

(Sd.) C.R.C.'

Mohamed Ali discussed the subject with Mr Abdul Majid for some time, desiring to understand precisely the nature and the scope of the required undertaking.

As it happened, Bi Amman, Mohamed Ali's mother, disregarding the requirements of purdah, came into the room where the

Deputy Superintendent of Police was conversing with the Brothers, and addressed him in these or similar words:

'I understand that the Government desires at last to do justice to my sons by restoring them to liberty. Naturally I rejoice at this, for who can know better than myself what they have had to endure during the last twenty-eight months, and what it has cost them to endure it? But I understand that Government now requires them to give an undertaking of some sort. Well, they are old enough to understand what is to their advantage and what is not to their advantage, and also to understand what is right and what is wrong. They certainly do not need any advice from me today. But I should like you to tell Government from me that they owe me a duty prior to any they may owe to others, for I bore them for nine months and suckled them in their infancy, and our Prophet has told them that their Paradise lies under my feet. Knowing, as I do, all that they have suffered during their long exile and internment, I can also understand how hard it must be for them to reject any terms the acceptance of which means the end of all this long-drawn misery. But I want Government to know that if, in order to escape from their sufferings, they will promise anything in the least contrary to the dictates of their faith, or the interests of their country, God will, I feel sure, give enough strength to my mother's heart, and these palsied hands, to throttle them that instant, dear as they are to me, and strong and stalwart as they look. For the rest, they have always been law-abiding subjects of the King-Emperor, and in your presence I order them to remain so in the future as well. That is all that I had to say, and I would request you to tell the Government what I have told you.'

The undertaking that the Ali Brothers actually gave ran as follows:

'*B-ism-i-'llah-i-r-Rahman-i-r-Raheem.* We have always been God-fearing Muslims, who accept above all else the commandments of God as conveyed to us in the Holy Qur'an and the life and sayings of our Prophet. Without prejudice to this faith, we have always been law-abiding lovers of our country, opposed to all unconstitutional and violent methods, and, war or no war, this we always desire and hope to remain. Therefore, we have no objection to give an assurance, if any is still needed, to the effect that, without prejudice to our allegiance to Islam, we shall abstain from doing, writing, or saying anything intended or reasonably likely to encourage or assist the enemies of the King-Emperor, and from doing, writing, or saying anything intended or reasonably likely

to be construed as an attack upon the allies and friends of the King-Emperor, and that we shall also abstain from any violent or unconstitutional agitation likely to affect the public safety. We understand, and base the above undertaking on the clear understanding, that the abstentions promised above are not intended to restrict, in the slightest measure, our freedom to observe all our religious duties as Mussalmans, or to cause us to refrain from participation in politics within constitutional limits.'

On 9 September 1917, Mohamed Ali heard for the first time from the Raja of Mahmudabad of some letters of a treasonable character which the Government apparently said it had in its possession.

It seemed that there were two letters, which were clearly stated to have persuaded the Government of India at the last moment not to restore him to liberty. One of these was stated to be a letter written by Mohamed Ali to the Ameer of Afghanistan in Persian, a language in which he had never yet attempted to compose. In this he was alleged to have asked the late Ameer to invade India. It was stated that this letter had actually been received by His late Majesty, and then sent to the Government by special messenger.

The other letter was supposed to have been written by Shaukat Ali to their spiritual adviser and preceptor, Maulana Abdul Bari of Firangi Mahal, Lucknow, and was said to have come into the hands of the Government between 5 and 13 September 1917, and to have been written about that time. This was alleged to have been the one which was the greatest hitch in the way of obtaining their release.

The story of these letters, the originals of which the Government of India claimed to possess, has not been told. The letters were forged, a fact which is proved by subsequent events for, despite repeated requests from Mohamed Ali, the letters were never published. Not only that. Their existence was not even mentioned in the charges which were served on Mohamed Ali in 1919, three and a half years after his internment.

In October 1917, Mohamed Ali wrote to Sir James Du Boulay, officiating Home Member, repudiating most emphatically the

charge of having written such letters and denying all knowledge of any connection with them.

It is significant that, just as it was never stated by the Government of India that they were not released because they refused to give the required undertaking, or added a saving clause to it, in precisely the same manner, the Government never stated that they were guilty of corresponding with the King's enemies, and, in fact, clearly let it be understood not long after their disclaimers that it was itself inclined to regard these letters as fabrications.[11]

Mohamed Ali submitted to the Censor for his sanction a telegram addressed to the Raja of Mahmudabad and two of the other Muslim members of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, emphatically denying the authorship of such letters, and requesting the Government, through them, to show him the letters said to be in its possession. The Censor forwarded this telegram to the local administration, which subsequently forwarded it, not to the addressees, but to the Government of India. As nothing was heard in reply to this request, he addressed a letter in October 1917 to Sir James Du Boulay, Member of the Government of India in charge of the Home Department, who was personally known to him. In this, he again denied categorically, on behalf of his brother as well as his own, the authorship of, and every other criminal connection with, any such letters, and repeated the request that they might be shown to them.

In 1917 the loyalty of Muslims was being put to the test on the battlefields on every front, but the loyalty of Mohamed Ali was still suspect. Mr Montagu, the Secretary of State, was at this time on a visit to India. In a spirit of unreasonableness hard to beat, the Home Department of the Government of India declined the request of an All-India Deputation of Muslims to wait

11. Letter dated London, 12 April 1920, from Mohamed Ali to Montagu, Secretary of State for India, J & P. 2435, India Office Library.

on Mr Montagu unless they deleted the demand for Mohamed Ali's release from their memorandum which they proposed to submit to the Secretary of State. The unanimous election of Mohamed Ali to the presidentship of Muslim League made little impact on Government. In a resolution adopted at the session the League announced its decision to initiate a campaign of constitutional agitation with a view to securing the release of the two brothers. Gandhi was a party to this resolution.

In 1917 the Muslim League passed a resolution demanding the release of Ali Brothers. Fazlul Haq and other leaders threatened that if Government did not release the internees, Muslims should resign their positions as members of various legislative bodies. The Government did not release Mohamed Ali and Muslims did not resign from Legislative Councils.

In 1918 a Committee was appointed by the Viceroy to examine the question of Ali Brothers' release. It consisted of two judges of the High Court, one of them an Indian and an ardent political opponent of Mohamed Ali.

'At our request it forwarded to us a number of very brief and indefinite statements which were supposed to be the reasons for our internment, but curiously enough they did not include the most important and definite statement that had been heard about a great deal during the whole of the previous year, namely, that we had written to His Majesty the late Amir of Afghanistan, a letter urging him to attack India which His Majesty had, of course, forwarded to the Government of India with a special envoy and that my brother had written during our internment a letter to our spiritual adviser telling him that it was now necessary to resort to violence and to organise an armed rebellion against the British Government.'[12]

Justice Abdur Rauf, one of the members of the Enquiry Committee appointed to review Mohamed Ali's case, was hostile to Mohamed Ali. The press suggested that he should resign and recommended either Abdur Rahim or Sir Ali Imam.[13]

12. *My Life : A Fragment*, pp. 135-36.

13. *Swaraj Vastavani*—an Anglo-Gujrati daily of Bombay, 11 October 1918.

An English weekly from Sukkur pointed out that Justice Rauf's appointment had failed to secure the approval of the Indian Muslims because of his strained relations with Mohamed Ali and appealed that someone else might be appointed.[14]

Another newspaper, referring to a statement by Mohamed Ali's mother that Justice Rauf was 'a personal enemy' of the Brothers, wrote: 'It would be nothing short of a mockery of justice to conduct an inquiry where the judge is a personal enemy of the accused.'[15]

The Government did not revise its decision nor did Justice Rauf offer to resign.

Gandhi met Mohamed Ali for the first time in 1915 at Delhi. He later wrote: 'It was a question of love at first sight between us.'[16]

He kept in close touch with Ali Brothers during their detention through their legal counsel, Mr Ghate. In the first letter written by Gandhi to Mohamed Ali on 18 November 1918, he says:

> 'I have had the charges against you read to me. I have never read a weaker or flimsier indictment and think that your reply will be decisive, straight and dignified. . . . Your defence is so overwhelmingly strong that if the Committee's finding is hostile an agitation can be raised which will make India resound with indignation over the monstrous injustice under which you have laboured so long and so patiently.'[17]

The flimsy charges, when they were at last supplied two months after the appintment of the Committee, were not accompanied by the evidence on which orders of internment were based.

Gandhi had read most of the correspondence between the Brothers and the Committee and also the communication embody-

14. *Sind Moslem*, 12 October 1918.
15. *Bombay Character*, 24 October 1918.
16. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XV (1965), 256.
17. Ibid., Letter No. 74.

ing the charges against them. He wrote to the Viceroy:

'The impression left upon my mind is that the Brothers have been interned and subjected to numerous hardships without the slightest justification. The charges in my humble opinion did not warrant action under the Defence of India Act. I submit that under a free government they would hold in it a prominent position instead of being treated as a danger to it. They are brave, perfectly straightforward, they are outspoken, God-fearing, and able men, commanding the respect alike of the Mohamedans and the Hindus. It would be difficult to find throughout India better specimens of joint Hindu and Mohamedan cultures. In a position which to them is exasperating, they have evinced wonderful self-restraint and patience. Their very virtues seem to have been regarded as an offence. They deserved a better treatment.'[18]

He told the Viceroy that ever since the Muslim League session at Calcutta in December 1917, they and other Muslims had accepted his advice. 'But for his advice they would have carried on a powerful and embarrassing agitation long before this.' He had advised them that if relief was not granted Satyagraha should be resorted to. He had told them that before engaging in a public agitation 'we should know the Government side of the question, and we should exhaust all milder remedies and be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of impartial observers the untenability of the Government point before embarking on Satyagraha in which once it is undertaken there is no turning point.'

Gandhi concluded that the delay had almost reached a dangerous point and hoped the Government, by releasing them, would prevent a powerful agitation in the country.[19]

Gandhi's interest in Mohamed Ali's release was understandable. 'We have a common goal,' he wrote to Mohamed Ali, 'and I want to utilize your services to the uttermost, in order to reach that goal.'[20]

18. Gandhi to Maffey, PS to V, 20 February 1919. C.P., E 264 No. 75, Vol. 22, Part A.

19. Ibid.

20. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XV.

The charges were communicated to Mohamed Ali on 13 November 1918 and they were interviewed by the Committee at Chhindwara on 6 and 7 December 1918, four days after Mohamed Ali had submitted a Written Statement. Most of the reasons for internment furnished to Mohamed Ali after three and a half years of incarceration related to his journalistic activities and his sympathy for Turkey as it found expression through the columns of his newspapers.

The Committee,[21] after having read the Written Statement comprising 127 paragraphs and covering 50 foolscap printed pages, interviewed Ali Brothers in detention. Finally they were informed that they could not be released so long as the peace negotiations with Turkey continued. A year previously Mrs Annie Besant had been told by the Viceroy and other members of the Government that it was Ali Brothers' sympathy for Turkey that prevented their release during the War. Now that the War had ended, their sympathy for Turkey prevented their release during the peace negotiations!

The Viceroy informed the Secretary of State on 10 January 1919 that the 'report which has been recently received fully justifies the action of the Government of India, but suggests the release of the brothers on the ground that, although peace terms have not been signed, the War is now virtually over, and that there is no longer occasion to apprehend that any views or activities of theirs can interfere with the relations between England and Turkey.'[22]

It was quite clear that Mohamed Ali was not interned because he had offended against the laws of the land, but merely on a doubtful and dubious plea of political necessity. He was not informed of the charges against him at the time the executive order went forth because there were none. There was no attempt even at the

21. The tribunal consisted of Mr B. Lindsay, I.C.S., Judicial Commissioner of Oudh, and Mr Abdul Rauf who officiated as Judge of the High Court at Allahabad.

22. C.P., V to SS, telegram P. No. 73, Vol. 10, No. 67.

mockery of a trial and he was simply ordered out of his liberty. The end of the War could not bring about the end of his internment. Six months more had to elapse. Identity of faith with the 'King's enemies' was considered sufficient basis for internment. It seemed as if the guardians of public safety were reverting to medieval practices, and entering the sphere of opinion and belief and punished people for cherishing their faith.

When the recommendation of the Committee to release Mohamed Ali and his brother was rejected Mohamed Ali thought it was time to put the record straight. He wrote a lengthy letter to the Viceroy. The news leaked out to the press with the result that the Home Department of the Government of India issued a communique referring to Mohamed Ali's letter as a 'memorial' to the Viceroy, stating that it was 'intemperate' and 'inaccurate,' and announcing that the document was proscribed. Not only that. The Government also announced that in consequence of his misconduct Mohamed Ali was now to be transferred to the Betul Jail instead of being allowed to stay in detention in Chhindwara. In a communique dated 13 June 1919, the Government stated :

> 'In the memorial they expressed themselves intemperately and inaccurately about the attitude of the British Government to Muslim questions and stated that in the event of non-compliance with their demands there remained no choice for a good Muslim in India except between *Hijrat* (migration) and *Jehad* (Holy War). This document was proscribed by the Government of India but surreptitious attempts were nevertheless made to print and circulate it among the leading Muslims in India and to publish it in the press. It is to the credit of the press of India that no newspaper gave it publicity.
>
> 'Since the opening of the frontier campaign indisputable proofs have reached the Government of India that the brothers are making every effort to induce Muslims in India actively to assist the Amir of Afghanistan in his hostilities against His Majesty the King Emperor. They have with those objects addressed various important personages in India as well as newspapers and private individuals. The originals of some of those letters are in the possession of the Government of India.
>
> 'Recently on the 30th May, Mohamed Ali made a speech at the mosque in which he abused certain leading Muslims for con-

demning the action of the Amir of Afghanistan and asserted that no Muslim could, without detriment to his soul, take part in the war against Afghanistan. He declared that it was the duty of Musalman not to fight against his brother when he is fighting for Islam.'[23]

The 'intemperate' letter which, so far as it is known, has not yet seen the light of day, was dated 24 April 1919. Since it sums up eloquently Mohamed Ali's position at this time, it should be of interest to reproduce the full text:[24]

'Since no method has yet been discovered of assessing the value of personal freedom, it is not possible for us to communicate to another an exact idea of what we lost when we lost our liberty. Nor is it possible for others to gauge the mental anguish we have endured in four years of exile, or the cumulative effect of the daily vexations of a detenu's life. The only form of loss that is capable of any precise indication is monetary; and when it is understood that one result of our internment, and that the least serious, was that we were made to sustain the loss of two and a half lakhs of rupees in the last four years, some idea may be formed of the punitive character of a measure for which it has repeatedly been claimed on behalf of Government that it is purely precautionary.

'Incidentally, Government's dealing with us in these matters provides a fair enough test for judging whether our internment was due solely to public consideration. It is conceivable that public safety may need the restriction of a man's freedom in times of great stress and imminent danger to the State. But it could not conceivably need his financial ruin. To have deprived us of our liberty without just cause, and even without the semblance of an inquiry, was bad enough. But to have knowingly worried us with daily want, and to have forced our children, in spite of our repeated remonstrances, to grow up almost in ignorance for want of funds wherewith to educate them, was worse. One may attempt, if he so desires, to reconcile tyranny with public consideration; but meanness goes well only with malice.

'However, the loss of one's business and the resulting privations may be borne along with the more grievous loss of personal liberty; and we may well console ourselves for all the disabilities and discomforts that we have patiently borne all these years with the

23. J & P 2091/20 with 1451019, India Office Library.

24. Mohamed Ali's letter to Viceroy about rejecting the Committee's recommendations to release him, dated 24 April 1919.

reflection that neither we nor our fellow-countrymen need be ashamed of our conduct during our prolonged internment. But no Government was expected in the twentieth century to claim, even by implication, the right to force a man's conscience. And yet it is only on this hypothesis that the action of Government with respect to the internment of Moslem Ulema and public workers, and the virtual suppression of the entire Moslem Press, culminating in the forfeiture of Dr. Ansari's address, becomes intelligible.

'As for ourselves, there was at one time much talk of the discovery of some treasonable correspondence of ours with His late Majesty the Ameer of Afghanistan, and with our spiritual preceptor, Maulana Abdul Bari Saheb of Firangi Mahal, Lucknow, just when our release seemed to be in sight. But when immediately on hearing of it we openly challenged Government to produce these letters, this talk came very soon to subside. When a year later a statement of the reasons for our internment and for the refusal to release us was furnished to us, this preposterous accusation did not make its appearance at all. But this alone could not satisfy us. Unwilling to tolerate any longer a constant shifting of the ground on the part of our accusers, we demanded from the Committee of Inquiry when it came here to examine us and hold a searching investigation into the matter, so that one lie at least might be nailed to the counter. But all the satisfaction that we could obtain was the information that, in spite of an abundance of vague and undefined charges, not a word had been mentioned before the Committee on the subject of so grave and definite an accusation. Nevertheless we pressed our demand for an inquiry into what must have been a diabolical forgery; but since we have not yet been furnished with the Committee's report, we are unable to say whether it did its obvious duty by instituting a searching inquiry into the matter, or merely manipulated the so-called evidence secretly furnished to it, though never disclosed to us, in order to arrive at such eminently convenient results.

'We are not, however, concerned here with anything beyond the one clear reason on which Government has publicly based its justification of our internment. And it is nothing but our freely expressing and promoting sympathy with our Moslem brethren, and maintaining our allegiance to the Caliph of our Prophet (on whom be God's benedictions and peace) and Commander of the Faithful. This was the reason given in September 1917 for restrictions having been originally imposed on us in May 1913, and for the refusal to modify the orders nearly two and a half years later. This again ran through all the vague and flimsy charges regarding the Khuddam-i-Ka'ba Society and Pan-Islamsim furnished to us in November 1918. And, finally, this is the only justification now communicated to us alike for the Committee's

findings and its recommendation and the Government's rejection of its advice urging our release. We were interned because we freely expressed and promoted a sympathy, and maintained an allegiance demanded from us by our Islamic faith. We were not released along with Mrs. Besant and her co-workers because of this sympathy and this allegiance. And now that the Committee has found this sympathy and this allegiance to have provided full justification for our internment four years ago, and for the subsequent refusal to release us, even the advice tendered by it to Government that we should now be released is itself based on the belief that neither the one nor the other can "interfere with the relations between Great Britain and Turkey". Finally, the Government rejects the advice and refuses to release us, because, thank God, "there has been no change whatever in the attitude of the brothers". But because we are as staunch as ever in our faith in Islam and all that it implies, and hold the same view of honest Imperial policy as before, the destinies of the Empire as well as those of the Caliphate must be settled behind our backs, while we are still bound hand and foot and gagged into the bargain in the interests of the Empire, and presumably also of Islam's safety!

'Viewing the matter even from the lower plane of politics, we now ask Your Excellency, what can be the significance of the Empire to an Indian if the mere expression of his opinion, declared by no court of law to be unlawful, in respect of a far-reaching settlement of the Empire's future relations with another Empire, involving, as they must, his own and his country's happiness or misery, prosperity or ruin, are permitted to be declared by the Executive and its nominees to be an "interference" and almost a crime! Such a doctrine if allowed to remain unchallenged would reduce the Imperial idea to the meanest trickery; for in the name of the Empire we shall continue to be asked to sacrifice not only wealth and life, but also our eternal salvation, and the only return that we shall continue to receive would be fetters and a gag. If this is to be the standardised value of Imperial Citizenship, then we have clearly reached a stage when every Indian subject of His Majesty should seriously reconsider the bargain.

'Looking at the matter, however, from the viewpoint of faith, this denial of liberty to "interfere with the relations between Great Britain and Turkey"—in other words, between the State and the Church of Islam—is itself nothing short of interference in a most vital matter of faith. Since Government cannot even now, when the eternal pretence of the war can no longer be pleaded as an excuse, restore to a Mussalman the liberty which he should never have lost, on the solitary ground that "there has been no change whatever in his attitude" in a vital matter of faith, and he is as unwilling as ever to prejudice his eternal salvation by

forswearing the creed that demands from him the expression and promotion of sympathy with his brothers in faith, and the maintenance of his allegiance to the Commander of the Faithful, we are irresistibly driven to ask ourselves whether, consistently with our creed and its universally acknowledged implications, we and other Indian Mussalmans can any longer remain under British subjection.

'For four long years we retained the fetters placed on our feet and did not remove the gag from our mouths. But what occurred during the four years of war with Turkey, and, still more, what is now being enacted at the Peace Conference, makes it obligatory that the seal of silence must be broken and Government must be made to realise the extreme gravity of the issue that is being forced on the Moslem subjects of His Majesty.

'Moslem loyalty and support had so often been assured to Government in our generation, and even Moslem contentment was so often unduly taken for granted, that other communities had with some justice made our attitude towards Government almost a matter of reproach. It was a strange return for all this loyalty and support, that, without any effective protest, and often with the concurrence of His Majesty's Government, blow after blow was aimed at the temporal power of Islam. As a prominent Anglo-Indian newspaper admitted, "at all points the independent dominion of the Moslem was hemmed in and threatened, and the future seemed dark for its continuance in any part of the world". Government could not have been unaware of the sorrow and suffering that all this entailed for the Mussalmans of India. No section of the community remained unaffected or unmoved, and princes in their palaces and peasants in their huts alike passed anxious days and sleepless nights. Our public servants, that already carry on their shoulders the main burden of Indian administration so ungrudgingly and on such poor remuneration, and are yet so inordinately subservient to superior authority, and the very policemen, who are too often assumed to have no human sensibilities beyond the one lively desire to serve the bureaucracy and its bidding denounce every fellow-countryman of independent views—they, too, felt the shock of these successive blows, when Europe went on battering and disintegrating the temporal power of Islam, and threatened the Caliphate itself with isolation and rapid decay.

'It was not, however, the fear of losing political dominance that troubled the Mussalmans most. The spiritual force of Islam does not depend on political supremacy, and for the most vital tradition of our faith is the humble beginning of Islam in the midst of hostile elements of extraordinary potency and malice, and the ceaseless persecution of our Prophet during the greater part of his prophetic career, a tradition that was revived and

rejuvenated by the martyrdom of his grandson, Husain, with his little band of two and seventy heroes on the ever memorable field of Kerbela. What the cruel occurrences in Tripoli and the Balkans, at Holy Meshed and Tabriz, had led Mussalmans to apprehend was that the temporal power of Islam might be so weakened that it might become liable to suffer, without adequate power to prevent, the curtailment of its spiritual influence through the pressure of the temporal power of rival creeds.

'The Moslem Press of India did everything in its power to warn Government against the disastrous consequences of the policy it seemed bent on pursuing, and no method was left untried of impressing on Great Britain that if she desired to retain the goodwill of the Mussalmans, a hundred millions of whom were members of her composite Empire, she must befriend and keep the Caliphate on her side, and deal more fairly and equitably with Moslem Kingdoms and countries such as Persia, Afghanistan and Morocco. But not one of these warnings was heeded. The result was inevitable, and when war was declared between Great Britain and Turkey, some sort of an apologia as well as an assurance was felt to be needed.

'On the authority of His Majesty's Government, Your Excellency's predecessor gave a most solemn pledge "in regard to the Holy Places of Arabia, including the Holy Shrines of Mesopotamia and the port of Jeddah, in order that there may be no misunderstanding on the part of His Majesty's most loyal Moslem subjects as to the attitude of His Majesty's Government in this war". This pledge was to the effect that "these Holy Places and Jeddah will be immune from attack or molestation by the British military and naval forces"; and it was supplemented by the announcement that "at the request of His Majesty's Government, the Governments of France and Russia had given similar assurance". Nevertheless it is now admitted that "a close blockade of the coast of the Red Sea was instituted"; and it is clear that the Arabs of the holiest of the Holy Places of Islam were threatened with certain starvation in order to compel them to revolt against their temporal sovereign and renounce the allegiance which they owed under the law of Islam to the legitimate successor of the Arabian Prophet. The chronicler of *The Times* newspaper adds that subsequently "events were so far advanced as to warrant a landing of arms at Rabegh," a coast town on the pilgrim route midway between the Sacred Harems of Mecca and Medina. Later, "a meeting took place with one of the sons of the Emir and Grand Sherif of Mecca," and "the die was cast by the Grand Sherif for revolt". At British instigation, and presumably with British support, even if the precise nature of it has not yet been disclosed in India, the forces of the Servant of the Holy Places were attacked at Mecca, and the garri-

son fell into the hands of the renegades. Then began the siege of Jeddah, the port for Mecca explicitly included in the British pledge and Allied assurance of immunity, and here it is announced, without any apparent qualms, that the renegades had the assistance of "the supporting British warships". It is said that they "could not approach nearer than 2,000 to 3,000 yards and the inevitable mirage made the shooting difficult". "Religious prejudice"—such is the phrase—"forbade the landing of a spotting officer". But—and this is sufficiently significant of the entire business—"towards the end, when the ships' surgeons had ministered to the wounded Arabs, this latter difficulty was overcome". It is needless to pursue any further this chronicle of the manner in which a solemn pledge was kept in the case of Jeddah. Medina, the Sacred Harem of our Prophet, resisted the renegades of Mecca to the last; so its surrender had to be provided for directly by the British in the terms of the armistice forced on the Servant of the Holy Places; and even then his forces had to be made to evacuate the Sacred Harem by means of a British threat. The third Sacred Harem at Jerusalem was attacked practically by British forces alone.

'As for Mesopotamia, the Land of the Holy Shrines, a perusal of the Mesopotamian Commission's report makes it abundantly clear that an attack, which had been provided for a month before the declaration of war, was already in progress when the pledge of immunity was being given. With the varying fortunes of the war the desire of an advance on Baghdad varied in intensity. But the disastrous results of the Gallipoli campaign made His Majesty's Government utterly regardless of their solemn assurances. On the 21st October, 1915, less than a year after the pledge of 2nd November, 1914, we find the Secretary of State for India telegraphing to the Viceroy as follows: "At present moment. . . . our position and prospects in Gallipoli are most uncertain. . . . Arabs are wavering, and will probably join Turks unless we can offer them great inducement. We are, therefore, in great need of striking success in the East. . . . It is suggested that we should occupy Baghdad giving assurances to Arab leaders that we favour creation of Arab State independent of Turks." When these assurances were being contemplated, it seems the "great need of a striking success in the East" had driven out all recollection of the solemn assurances that had been given to "His Majesty's most loyal Moslem subjects". As the sequel has only too plainly proved, Holy Najaf, Kerbela, Kazimain and Samarra remained no more immune from attack or molestation than did Baghdad, and today all are alike under British occupation and control. Little was permitted to be published as to what occurred in these Holy Places when they were attacked or came to be occupied. But some news has always managed to trickle down to India, and even the little that Indian Mussalmans

have been enabled to learn about these occurrences has caused widespread sorrow and resentment.

'What is still more intolerable, Indian Mussalmans, including Rulers of States and their subjects, and civilians as well as soldiers, have been required to assist in the prosecution of a war against the Caliphate, and given no option to stop further assistance when, in the exercise of his religious function, the Caliph declared a *Jehad*. Government could not have been unaware of the great volume of sullen discontent created by this outrage on their faith, and although the terrorism exercised with the help of the Press and the Defence of India Acts suppressed Moslem opinion, official papers have occasionally thrown a fierce enough light on this matter. In the Mesopotamian Commission's report are published extracts from a letter addressed by General Townsend to Your Excellency's predecessor on 2nd November 1915, in which the following significant expressions occur: "These troops of mine are tired and their tails are not up but slightly down. The Muhammadans are not pleased at approaching the sacred precincts of Salman Pak at Ctesiphon—the troops are not confident and have had enough." What the Moslem troops must have felt when they were being forced to advance on Jerusalem or Baghdad can easily be imagined, and it is not altogether unknown in India that some of them with greater moral courage than others gave expression to their religious scruples and paid the penalty of their faith.

'As regards the question of the Caliphate, in the early part of the war, when British Protectorate was declared over Egypt, and a "Sultan" was set up in the place of the reigning Khedive in exile, the British Press was permitted to coquet freely with the idea of a transfer of the Caliphate to someone who could be trusted to register the decrees of the British Foreign Office; but for once Moslem opinion asserted itself, and the matter was allowed to drop. Subsequently, the renegade Sherif Hussain assumed with the concurrence of the British the title of "King" in a land in which the Sultans of Turkey were content to be merely Servants of the Holy Places, and apparently he was for a time encouraged to aspire to the title of the Commander of the Faithful, while the British Government continued to treat him as an ally and friend, and has now successfully assisted him in securing representation at the Peace Conference, where seventy million Indian Mussalmans, including such great Rulers of States as His Exalted Highness the Nizam, are still unrepresented. It is true that, after the unsuccessful tour of the Sherif's agents in India, Government had repeated its earlier declaration that it recognises the question of the Caliphate to be "one for Moslem opinion alone to decide". But of what practical use is such an empty recognition if, on the one hand, those who maintain their allegiance to it as required by their

faith are treated as criminals, and, on the other, an attempt is being made to dismember the Caliph's Empire and weaken the temporal power of Islam by setting up a number of possible rivals in local and tribal chiefs?

'A still more deplorable feature of the activities of the Allied and Associated Governments is that the Jazeerat-ul-Arab, or "the Island of Arabia," carefully delimited by Moslem Ulema and lexicographers, over no part of which, according to the testamentary injunctions of the Holy Prophet, non-Moslem control is to be tolerated, is proposed to be placed under the control of Christian Powers, with Great Britain herself as the controller of the Hejaz. Palestine is already promised away by Great Britain and her associates and allies to the Jews, presumably as a belated reward for the Jews' treatment of Christ (on whom be peace). But it is forgotten that in the 7th century Christian priests and patriarchs had asked the Moslem besiegers of the Holy City to suspend hostilities, while they invited the Caliph Omar and delivered into his hands the keys of Jerusalem. It need hardly be recalled that when the entire Christendom waged a Holy War against the Moslem Servants of the Holy Place four and a half centuries later, and met with initial success, the Mussalmans contested with the Crusaders for more than a century thereafter for the honour of serving the Holy City that was for fourteen years the Qiblah towards which their Holy Prophet and his companions used to pray, and that after rivers of blood had flown they finally repulsed the Crusaders fighting under an English king. Any designs on the Holy Land, howsoever skilfully disguised, will only recreate the spirit of the Crusades which an Empire with a hundred million Moslem members may do only at its peril.

'The war is now over; but the spirit of tyranny that it generated is still abroad, and while, on the one hand, it is being proclaimed in high-sounding phrases that those who are assembled at Paris to decide the destinies of the world on a more equitable and humane basis than Brute Force, are not the masters of the people but their servants, the Government, on the other hand, is denying to the people of India even the barest expression of opinion on questions that vitally concern them. Not only is the gag not to be removed yet from our own mouths, but a gag of prodigious proportions has been prepared now for silencing more than three hundred millions of God's articulate creatures. The Rowlatt Bill just enacted in the most tyrannical manner has ended the reign of law and substituted a reign of terror in its place, and, although it affects every section of the people of India, the Mussalmans are certain to be its first, and its worst, victims. It has been the Moslem Press that has suffered most under the Press Act; and the same has been true of the Defence of India Act, if we only exclude the unfortunate young

men of Bengal rotting in solitary cells or swampy islands, without trial or hope of release. Even those who profess a pathetic optimism, and hope against hope that the bureaucracy armed with the strength of the giant will not use it as tyrannically as the giant, need only have access to our own experience to be cured of this distressing delusion. We, who have already had enough experience of "Executive discretion," and of "investigating authorities," sitting in camera, farcically inquiring into undefined charges, and dealing with undisclosed "evidence" without the help of any code of procedure or law of evidence, submitting reports that cannot bear the light of the day, and being finally dismissed as ignorant persons for all their pains, can claim to speak with some authority, and say that the "Black Act" is nothing more or less than the virtual outlawry of a fifth of mankind.

'The forfeiture of Dr. Ansari's Address, which should have been placed by Government with its fullest support on the table of the Peace Conference as an authoritative exposition of Islamic law on the subjects of the Caliphate, the Jazeerat-ul-Arab and the Holy Places, and which was replete with Quranic texts and the Prophet's Traditions, is sure to create the impression that Government is not only anxious to keep the Moslems muzzled when their fate is being discussed and decided by men of other creeds, but that India itself is no longer safe for Islam and its free exposition. But has the Government realised to what this would undoubtedly lead? When a land is not safe for Islam a Moslem has only two alternatives—*Jehad* or *Hijrat*. This is to say, he must either make use of every force God has given him for the liberation of the land and the ensurement of perfect freedom or the practice and preaching of Islam, or he must migrate to some other and freer land with a view to return to his Motherland when it is once more safe for Islam. This is no new doctrine, but as old as the eventful *Hijrat* of our Prophet thirteen hundred years ago, in which the Moslem Era had its birth, and from which it takes its name.

'In view of our weak condition, migration is the only alternative for us; and if we are forced either to forswear our faith, or leave our Motherland, we could only migrate from this great country to which Islam brought its blessings more than twelve hundred years ago. A Mussalman is required by his faith, which is catholic and universal, to maintain an extraordinary detachment from country and race. But Islam is firmly based on the solid rock of human nature, and we are neither required to cultivate, nor have we in fact cultivated an unnatural indifference to the land we live in, or the good people who inhabit it along with us millions of ties that have been forced in our twelve century long sojourn in India would seek to keep us tied down to it, and when we migrate, as we must, the minarets of our mosques would continue to beckon

to us, and their domes, that would resound no more with the cries of "God is Greatest," would by their very silence recall us to them. And even if we proved unresponsive to the fraternal calls of the living, the non-Moslem compatriots with whom we have for so many centuries fought for the good of our motherland, and have together developed India's marvellous Arts and Culture the graves of our ancestors would exercise over us their spiritual spell. But a greater call would make us leave this dear land of ours—never dearer than now that we would be taking our leave of it—for it would be the imperative call of religious duty. But when it is understood that we shall be leaving it only in order to work for its liberation from lawless laws and the restoration of all its rights and privileges as the land of the free that God had made it, and that it is destined soon to be, we do not fear we shall be accused of want of patriotism or of desertion in the hour of its peril. Our mosques and the bones of our ancestors we shall entrust to the loving and reverential care of our non-Moslem fellow-countrymen; and God in His beneficence and infinite mercy has not left us in these wonderful days without many convincing proofs that this sacred trust will be in safe and deserving hands.

'This step, which we shall now have to consider with all the seriousness that its very nature demands, will be perhaps the most decisive in the history of our community since the *Hijrat* of our Holy Prophet. Discouraging and bitterly painful as our experience has been in recent years, we feel that before we finally take it one more opportunity must be given to the Government to review its attitude towards the people, and to see the drift of its policy of negation, of Swadharma, in addition to the neglect of Swadeshi and denial of Swarajya.

'We have so far studiously refrained from referring to more exclusively political affairs, though true politics, which comprises all public activities of mankind, is to us, as it is to our guide, philosopher and friend, Mahatma Gandhi, as much part of our religion as the Moslem demand for the restoration of the Holy Places of Islam. Every legitimate claim must rest on the basis of Truth, and Truth is nothing but Faith. We, therefore, wholeheartedly identify ourselves with the clear and emphatic political demand of the country for constitutional reforms and the better ensurement of our civil rights as voiced by the Indian National Congress and All-India Moslem League, now happily working together for the common weal. Having done this, we may for the present safely leave the advocacy of these general Indian claims in the hands of such great leaders of the people as Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and other Congressmen and members of the League.

'We have now only to define the more particularly Moslem

demands, though we are happy in the belief that they are no longer exclusively urged by the Mussalmans of India, but have received from our fellow-countrymen of other creeds also a firm pledge of support even unto death. These demands are as follows:

'I. There should never be any attempt to interfere by pressure or persuasion in the free choice by the Mussalmans of the Caliph of their Prophet.

'II. No Mussalman, whether a soldier or a civilian, should be asked to assist in any manner whatsoever in the prosecution of war or of any other hostile design, against the Caliph, when he has declared a *Jehad* in the exercise of the functions of the Caliphate, and such assistance has become *haram* thereafter according to the law of Islam; and any Mussalman undergoing at present any form of punishment for their refusal to render such assistance should be given complete amnesty.

'III. No part of the territories included in the expression Jazeerat-ul-Arab, as defined by the Moslem religious authorities and lexicographers, should be directly or indirectly occupied, or subjected to any form of non-Moslem control, but must remain as heretofore under independent Moslem occupation and control, as acquired by the testamentary injunction of the Holy Prophet; and the present occupation and control of every portion of such territories opposed to the letter or the spirit of this injunction should forthwith cease.

'IV. There should be no attempt to remove, whether directly or indirectly, from the independent, indivisible and inalienable sovereignty of the Caliph, who is the recognized Servant of the Holy Places and Warden of the Holy Shrines, any portion of the territories in which such Holy Places and Shrines are situated, including, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing expressions, the territories in which are situated the three Sacred Harems of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, and the Holy Shrines in Najaf, Kerbela, Baghdad, Kazimain, Samarra, Constantinople and Konieh; and such territories should forthwith be evacuated by the forces of His Majesty and of the Allied and Associated Governments, and restored to the Caliph, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

'V. Nor should there be any such attempt to dismember and parcel out, even among Moslem Governments, or in any other manner weaken the Caliph's Empire with the object of weakening the temporal power of Islam, and thereby make it liable to suffer, without adequate power to prevent, the curtailment of its spiritual influence through the pressure of the temporal power of other creeds.

'VI. His Majesty's Government should restore to the Caliph the Vilayet of Egypt, so that it may once more be an integral

portion of his Empire; and it should make determined efforts to induce other powers also to restore similarly such other territories, like Bosnia Herzegovina and Tripoli, as they have forcibly been taken from him; and similar justice should be done in the case of other Moslem territories like those of Algiers, Tunis, Morocco, the Caucasus and the Khanates and Kingdoms of Central Asia.

'VII. If, as the result of the Peace Conference, the principle of Self-Determination is to be applied to the inhabitants of any territory, it should also be applied to the inhabitants of all territories that have been under Ottoman and other Moslem Governments; and the agency for ascertaining the result of such self-determination, which should be proportionately Moslem, should include Indian Mussalmans, such as Rulers of Moslem Indian States, divines and political leaders to be selected by the All-India Moslem League; and the Moslem delegation should be free to act in the aforesaid territories on the divine injunction : "Verily all Moslems are brothers ; wherefore make peace between your brothers."

'VIII. No Mussalman should in any manner be deprived of his liberty, or otherwise punished, molested or disquieted by reason of his expressing and promoting sympathy with his brother Mussalmans in any part of the world, or maintaining and strengthening the allegiance of all Mussalmans to the Caliph of the Holy Prophet, and Commander of the Faithful; and all persons thus dealt with should be forthwith set at liberty; and all newspapers suppressed for a like reason should be permitted free publication; and all monetary losses sustained by any person or newspaper through such action of Government should be made good.

'IX. Greater respect should be paid in the future to the universal sentiment of Indian Mussalmans that determined efforts should be made by British Imperial authorities to earn the goodwill and cultivate the friendship of Moslem Governments, such as those of Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and Morrocco, by countenancing, whether on the part of His Majesty's Government or of others, no dealings that are not open, fair and equitable; and as an earnest of this policy, such Moslem Governments should not be excluded from any of the benefits of any organization such as the projected League of Nations, but should be made equal participants therein along with other Governments.

'We now urge on Your Excellency's Government the extreme necessity of an early satisfaction of these legitimate demands of the Indian Moslem subjects of His Majesty. Having clearly and at considerable length explained our own position and that of our people, we desire to declare that we shall wait for a reasonable length of time for an indication of a change for the better in the Government's attitude which the situation in India and abroad so urgently demands; and if no convincing proof is given of such a

change at an early date, and Indian and Moslem claims continue to receive the same disdainful treatment, it will be our imperative duty to ask for our passports, and to recommend the same grave and extremely painful step to our co-religionists, so that they and we could migrate to some other land where to be a believing Mussalman and an ardent patriot is not considered a crime.

'In the meantime we declare that, so long as the "Black Act" remains on the Statute Book, we shall not consider ourselves bound to obey it; and that we shall break it and such other laws also as we may break without prejudice to our faith, and are advised by our friends and fellow-workers to break. We have for four long years done everything in our power that was consistent with our self-respect, and the dignity and dictates of our faith, to persuade Government to do us and our people justice. But Government has paid heed neither to our representations nor to the forbearance we have so long shown, and it has disdained to conciliate where it had the power to coerce. But fear of fellowman is no longer to be the compelling motive in India, and we hope and pray the only fear that this land may know hereafter may be the fear of God. The Holy Quran, which has been our solace and our guide in every trouble, had, thirteen hundred long years ago, provided for us both a warning and a way out of such difficulties as we and our people have to face today; nor has it left the glad tidings of reward unannounced. It says:

'"O ye that believe! seek assistance in patience and prayer; verily Allah is with the patient."

'"And do not speak of those that are slain in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive, but ye do not perceive."

'"And We will most assuredly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give glad tidings to the patient";

'"Who, when misfortune befalls them, say: Verily we are Allah's and unto Him we assuredly return."

'"Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course."

'It has pleased God to try us in some of these ways, and we pray to him to give us patience and courage to pass successfully through such other trials as may yet be in store for us. Our only talisman in all such tests and trials is a combination of patience and prayer; and, while taking the vow of patience, we pray for steadfastness and courage for ourselves and our people, and divine guidance for Government.'

THIS, then, was the Charter which forcefully outlined the Muslim case. The idea of *hijrat* was perhaps hasty and ill-conceived. Of

all people it was left to a Hindu leader to argue, 'The circumstances that attended the Prophet's flight were totally different. . . . He took with him the whole of the Mohammadans to Medina Sheriff. It was his satyagraha against the unbelievers of Mecca Sheriff.'

Commenting on the tone and temper of Mohamed Ali's letter to the Viceroy, Gandhi candidly told Mohamed Ali:[25]

'Your language was inflammatory and too full of declamation. . . . Your statement of the Mohammadan claim instead of representing an irreducible minimum was an exaggeration. . . . I would omit all mention of personal suffering. It stands as a living record speaking for itself. If you adopt my proposal, I would love to revise your draft' [volunteered Gandhi].

The letter went in its original form to the Viceroy.

A copy of Mohamed Ali's letter to the Viceroy was sent to the Secretary of State for India with Home Department letter No. 1005, dated 19 May 1919. In a confidential political report the Government of India informed Whitehall:

'The brothers used highly intemperate language regarding their treatment by the Government of India and regarding the attitude of the British Government to Moslem opinion on the question of the Turkish peace terms. The memorial also dealt with various other questions which had excited political feelings in India, such as the Rowlatt Bill, the Press Act, the Defence of India Act and the proscription of Dr. Ansari's address at the Delhi Session of the All-India Muslim League. On all these subjects the language used was violent and intemperate and the memorial also declared that in the event of non-compliance with Moslem demands regarding the future of Turkey, there remained only two alternatives for Indian Moslems—*Jehad* (holy war) or *Hijrat* (migration). As Moslems in India were too weak for *Jehad*, their duty was to emigrate.

'The memorial was proscribed under the Press Act but it was ascertained that a large number of copies had been printed in Bombay and possibly elsewhere, and that it was being surreptitiously circulated among leading Muhammadans, while attempts were being made to induce certain newspapers to publish it. Information was also received that efforts were being made to dis-

25. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, IX, 343.

tribute translations of the memorial in Gujrati, Urdu and Mahratti, that copies were to be sent to members of Parliament in England and that at least two Ruling Chiefs had received copies. The security deposit by the Bombay Press which printed the memorial was forfeited under the Press Act by an order of the Bombay Government.

'Early in May the brothers wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of Chhindwara informing him that after the 9th of that month they did not intend to hold themselves bound by the orders of internment under the Defence of India Act, but that they did not propose to leave Chhindwara for the present. This step was probably due to the fact that the news of the outbreak of war with Afghanistan reached Chhindwara early in May. The Deputy Commissioner was ordered to arrest and prosecute the brothers if they attempted to leave Chhindwara.

Since the outbreak of hostilities with Afghanistan the brothers have given expression to certain sentiments regarding the Amir's conduct which might have had the most dangerous effect on Muhammadan opinion in India. On the 15th May, Mohamed Ali wrote a letter to His Highness the Nawab of Jaora, which the Nawab handed to a representative of Government. In that letter Mohamed Ali said : "We are prepared to spare our dear motherland all risk of war by approacning His Majesty the Amir and asking him to sheathe the sword he has unsheathed obviously in the cause of Islam and justice to India, provided all our demands—Indian and Moslem—are forthwith conceded. But otherwise, let those who provoked this holy war fight it out. We cannot help them and must act up to our faith and according to our capacity." The letter also said: "When we wrote that representation (to the Viceroy) we could not have dreamt that the attitude of the British Imperial authorities and the Government of India which had driven us to contemplate *hijrat* would drive the Moslem Kingdom beyond our borders to declare *Jehad*, but the motives of the two actions being the same we can well feel what the young and spirited Amir must have felt concerning Islam and the Caliphate." There can be little doubt that similar letters were addressed to other leading Muhammadans in India. On the 14th May, Shaukat Ali wrote to the editor of the "Moslem Herald" newspaper of Allahabad in which he spoke of the Amir "coming as an avenger of the insults offered to Islam and as a *Mujahid* attacking in India the attackers of Jeddah, Palestine and the Jazirat-ul-Islam. It is *haram* (forbidden by religion) on us to fight against him. In fact unless Government accepts our demands and at once acts according to them, we according to our Quran have to help in the *Jehad*. This is God's truth and we ought not to keep it back."

'On the 30th May, Mohamed Ali made a speech in the Chhindwara mosque to the same effect. In this he abused certain leading Muhammadans who had publicly condemned the action of the Amir, and asserted that the latter was fighting for the cause of Islam and that no Muslim could without deteriment to his soul take part in the war against Afghanistan and that anyone shedding the blood of any *Mujahid* would find his destination in hell.

'To sum up, the Government of India have ample evidence that the brothers are pursuing an active campaign of hostility against the Government and have advocated assistance to the Amir of Afghanistan. They are also satisfied that the restrictions hitherto imposed upon them at Chhindwara under the Defence of India Act are not sufficient to prevent them from inciting loyal Muhammadans to discard their attitude of loyalty. The Governor-General in Council has therefore decided to issue orders under Regulation III of 1818 for their detention in the jail at Beitul in the Central Provinces.'[26]

THE war ended in November 1918, but repression in India was to continue. The Indian Legislature began the year 1919 with the consideration of two bills which came to be known after Mr Justice Rowlatt who had recommended adoption of emergency measures. The object was to arm the Government of India with extraordinary powers for dealing with dangerous situations. The evidence of witnesses, for example, was to be recorded only in summary. People could be detained merely on suspicion and without a trial. The legislature created a new offence : any person found in possession of a seditious document or intending to publish or circulate such a document was punishable with imprisonment extending to a period of two years or with fine or with both. A seditious document was defined as a document containing any writing or sign inciting violence against the Crown or its Government or against officers, etc. This meant that if any book or paper believed to be seditious was found in the pocket of an innocent person he would be taken to be guilty unless he proved that he was carrying it for a lawful purpose. This new offence

26. 10 R Indian Confidential Political Proceedings, Vol. 51, India Office Library, London.

altered completely the fundamental principle of British justice that a man was to be treated as innocent unless he was proved guilty. Now under the new dispensation a person was deemed guilty unless he proved his innocence.

These dark and desperate measures were condemned as Black Bills. The Congress demanded their repeal and declared 6 April 1919 Satyagraha Day. This was to mark the beginning of Non-Co-operation Movement and the leadership of Gandhi in Indian politics.

The main centre of unrest in the aftermath of the war was the Punjab and it was primarily against the revolutionary agitation in this province that the Rowlatt Act was aimed. The spark that set the Punjab ablaze occurred on 10 April, when two popular Congress leaders Drs Kitchlew and Satyapal were summoned by the District Magistrate of Amritsar and were then held *incommunicado*. On 13 April, on the Hindu New-Year Day, the Congress held a mammoth meeting to demand the release of the two leaders. The meeting was held in a public park called Jallianwala Bagh. Suddenly there appeared at the entrance of the Bagh some 150 armed soldiers under the command of General Dyer. According to the Hunter Commission of Inquiry, 397 were killed and about 1200 were wounded. The only reason the others were spared, according to General Dyer's testimony before the Commission, was that he had exhausted his ammunition! This was the worst crime in the annals of British rule in India, a massacre of defenceless people who could not even seek cover from the merciless attack.

A crawling order was imposed on all Indians who passed a narrow lane in the city where a medical missionary, Miss Sherwood, had been assaulted during the disturbances. Martial Law was imposed. The humiliation of crawling on all fours to and fro one's house was not to be forgotten or forgiven by those who were subjected to this indignity or, indeed, by any sensitive Indian. The Amritsar tragedy was a turning point in Indo-British relations almost as important as the Mutiny of 1857. It

roused a whole nation.

The decision of the Government not to release Mohamed Ali in spite of the recommendation of the Committee that it had itself appointed, synchronised with the massacre at Amritsar and the Punjab atrocities. As a protest against this cruel repression of India's aspirations even for a moderate degree of freedom, Mohamed Ali decided to disregard the restrictions that he had so patiently borne for full four years.

It was in consequence of this attitude that, instead of trying him in a court of law, under the Defence of India Act, which he had been forced to defy, the Government of India resorted to the device of spiriting him away without charge or trial, and confining him as a State prisoner in a jail under a *letter de cachet* of the Executive. This was issued under an obsolete Regulation, which it had passed more than a hundred years ago, when the Executive Government of the East India Company was itself the legislature of the limited area over which it ruled.

For seven months (8 June 1919 to 28 December 1919) Mohamed Ali and his brother were prisoners in Betul, a district headquarters in Central Provinces of India. As chance would have it, the Deputy Commissioner, one Mr C.G. Chenevix Trench, I.C.S., was at Oxford with Mohamed Ali. For once his Big Brother must have realised that Mohamed Ali's failure to get into the I.C.S. was after all not such a disaster as he had sometime imagined it to be. Had he succeeded in the examination he would have ended up as an obscure Deputy Commissioner like his contemporary.

In dealing with the case of the maintenance allowance of the State prisoner, Mr Trench wrote to the Chief Commissioner that he knew Mohamed Ali 'very well at Oxford 20 years ago,' and testified that he 'lived there in good style and appeared to be quite comfortable'. And yet the recommendation that he made savoured more of a petty accountant than a University pal. Giving a breakdown of the expenditure he came to the conclusion that Rs 775 p.m. should do for both the brothers who had

asked for the barest minimum of Rs 500 each per mensem. The Deputy Commissioner added, however, that 'my estimates do not include house rent''! This was being too clever by half. Mohamed Ali had four daughters, the two elder being seventeen and sixteen years of age. Mr Trench, in his estimates, ruled out the expenditure on their education because he thought they should be contemplating marriage.[27] He reported to the Government that the Brothers were 'extremely comfortably lodged, and their mother admitted as much to me today'. The Ali Brothers were occupying the jail hospital, the dimensions of which were 32′×20′. The light and ventilation, assured the Civil Surgeon, were perfect. Mohamed Ali was an old patient of diabetes but Mohamed Ali's friend, the Deputy Commissioner, assured the Government that he 'is not likely to injure his health in the very least'.

It is not out of place to mention that during nearly five years of their detention the Ali Brothers had to pay approximately Rs 15,000 per annum as out-of-pocket expenses on account of their respective business concerns, consisting for the most part of interest on borrowed capital. This meant complete financial ruin for two leading Indian Muslims who were deprived of their liberty on improvised suspicions and surmises.

THROUGHOUT the war years Mohamed Ali remained incarcerated. From the middle of May 1915 to June 1919, he was in detention under the Defence of India Act. These were years of terrible trials and tribulations for the country and the world which was caught in the throes of a war, but for Mohamed Ali it meant rest and an opportunity for reflection. Having been obliged to withdraw from the outside world he confronted himself and wandered about aimlessly, for some time, in the labyrinths of his own self. For the first time in his life he read through the Qur'an with care and

27. D.C. to Chief Secretary and to the Chief Commissiener, C. P. No. 427-A dated Beitul, 20 June 1919, India Office Library: Proceedings of the Home Department, September 1919.

understanding. Shibli's lectures which he heard as a young boy at school came alive. He read with absorbing interest the Urdu translation of the Qur'an by Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, a leading contemporary of Syed Ahmad Khan. He read it piecemeal, slowly and deliberately, and did not finish his first reading until after eight months. He was never tired of reverting to it:

'How often have we not felt as if the passages we happened to be reading on a particular day were revealed only that instant in response to our own prayer or to settle some point about which we happened to be undecided and uneasy. My brother would call out to me from his room and recite to me a verse, or I would do the same to him pointing out how apposite it was to the question we happened to be debating only a little before. And these "coincidences" were of such frequent occurrence that by degrees a habit of expectancy was formed, and we began to expect all unconsciously a response from the day's reading of the Qur'an to unexpressed reference to Heaven!'[28]

The Qur'an came to acquire a new coherence, everything seemed suddenly to fall into place creating an effect of unity such as Mohamed Ali had never realised before. He found a new meaning and a new significance in life. Nothing stood apart; nothing was alien; nothing could exist for itself unrelated to others. Man, made in the image of his Maker, was no plaything, a mere sport of chance; he was the master of his fate, the creator of his destiny. For Mohamed Ali[29] the keyword of the Qur'an was 'serve' and while man was free to serve whom he would, his inborn inherent faith, the nature with which his Creator had endowed him at his creation, told him that he was to serve none but the one God, the Creator, Sustainer and Developer of all Creation, and this 'revelation' of his own soul supported by the testimony of all Nature was finally confirmed by the teachings of those whom God had given a more acute intuition, the Prophets on whom had descended a yet more impressive revelation than his own. Once he chose to serve none but God and surrendered himself wholly to his Maker, he could not accept for

28. *My Life : A Fragment*, p. 91.

29. Ibid., p. 96.

himself a position of subservience to any other creature of God. This rightless slave of Allah became free for ever and the equal of Kings and Emperors in the greatest of all Republics, and even superior to them if they presumed to resist the Will of God, when he had identified his own will with God's. Then as the Vice-gerent of God he had the full force of the universe at his back, and had the entire Omnipotence of his Master at his beck and call. He could now use it whenever and wherever His Divine purpose necessitated its use, though he was no more than a poor weak biped whenever his own will asserted itself in any other direction.

This was the unique discovery which came as a result of years of reflection, an opportunity provided by those who thought they were imposing a penalty on him. Mohamed Ali was wild with enthusiasm—he felt like a Columbus who had discovered a new world for himself. He was literally bursting with joy. The individual experience of the explosive force of Truth hand transformed him. It now made all the difference between one who had something to say and the others who had to say nothing. Like the linnet he now sings because he must. He experienced a unique and indescribable sense of exhilaration. Always a Muslim in faith and feelings, Mohamed Ali now realised for the first time a new and profound significance in what had so far been vaguely a set of dogmas, a bundle of rituals which marked him out from other communities, but now his faith, his pledge to serve, to submit and to surrender, gave him a new sense of compulsion, a new urge of creation and a sensation of complete transformation.

As he read on the Qur'an he nearly remembered the whole of it without any conscious effort at committing it to memory. He was quoting it to all and sundry and he was sharing his discovery with his brother, his visitors, his servants. At about this time Mohamed Ali received a small book—the *Asrar-i-Khudi*, 'The Secrets of the Self'—which was published at Lahore in 1915. This was the work of Iqbal, already a well-known poet in India. But this was a poem completely different from anything he had written before. The poem is in Persian and is composed in the metre and style of the

famous *Masnavi* of Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi. In this poem Iqbal 'throws himself with all his might against idealistic philosophers and pseudo-mystical poets, the authors, in his opinion, of the decay prevailing in Islam, and argues that only by self-affirmation, self-expression, and self-development can the Moslems once more become strong and free. . . . He finds the ideal society in what he considers to be the Prophet's conception of Islam.'[30] Iqbal is 'inspired by a vision of a New Mecca, a worldwide, theocratic, Utopian state in which all Moslems, no longer divided by the barriers of race and country, shall be one. He will have nothing to do with nationalism and imperialism. These, he says, "rob us of Paradise": they make us strangers to each other, destroy feelings of brotherhood, and sow the bitter seed of war. He dreams of a world ruled by religion, not by politics, and condemns Machiavelli, that "worshipper of false gods".'[31]

Far Iqbal life is a forward assimilative movement. It removes all obstructions in its march by assimilating them. The moral and religious ideal of man is self-affirmation, not self-negation, and he attains to this ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique. The lesson of assimilative action is eloquently given in the life of the Prophet.

Mohamed Ali had known Iqbal and was among his many admirers, but now he read him carefully for the first time and immediately came under his spell. 'I experienced an exquisite thrill of delight,' he says,[32] 'when I found that the Poet and Philosopher was, in his own inimitable fashion, giving expression to the self-same basic truth of Islam, which I had in a blundering sort of way discovered for myself.'

Mohamed Ali read a lot of Iqbal whose significance he now understood for the first time. His reading, instead of being a pastime in the drudgery of detention, had become a purposeful inquiry. The Qur'an remained the centre of the studies and everything

30. R.A. Nicholson, *Secrets of the Self* (Lahore, 1969), Intro., pp. xii, xiii.
31. Ibid., pp. x, xi.
32. *My Life : A Fragment*, p. 127.

veered round it—an English translation by Maulvi Muhammad Ali of Lahore, a biography of the Prophet, *Sirat-un-Nabi*, the monumental work by his own tutor Shibli, which had just appeared, the *Sihah Sittah*, an Urdu translation of the six well-known compilations of the Prophet's Traditions, and last some of the works of H.G. Wells whom Mohamed Ali counted among his friends since his visit to London in 1913. He was greatly impressed by his novel: *God: The Invisible King*; and his latest novel, *Mr. Britling Sees it Through*, was not exactly dull reading, for Mr Britling suddenly stumbles into religion towards the end of the novel and discoveres God—an experience Mohamed Ali shares with him.

In the circumstances Mohamed Ali could not have been unhappy during his three and a half years internment in Chhindwara. He found an opportunity for self-expression in a series of discourses to the local Muslim community on the life of the Prophet, his teachings and the history of his times. The occasion was provided by the *Milad* Celebrations when Muslims collect to pay homage to the Prophet on his birth anniversary. Mohamed Ali gave no less than twenty-five lectures during this period and when he was moved to a jail in Betul he preached to the prisoners for seven months on the same theme, for hadn't Joseph preached the finest sermon that ever was to his fellow-prisoners?[33]

When war was being waged outside Mohamed Ali had come to the conclusion that narrow nationalism was a great illusion and was bound to lead to still more wars. The slogan about 'a war to end all wars' was a fraud and a deception. This tinselled falsehood could not long pass for truth when shots and shells were tearing everything into pieces. 'Some bloated profiteer safely seated in a Rolls-Royce leads millions to their death.'[34] Peace was what man desperately needed and peace was being constantly denied him. Islam meant peace, peace among men, and how had the message been completely corrupted and misrepresented by the crusading spirit of the West! In contemplating all the contemporary chaos

33. Ibid., p. 140.

34. Ibid., p. 132.

and confusion Mohamed Ali felt an irresistible urge to go to Europe and tell the people how they had been cheated and deceived.

Mohammed Ali was clearly smitten by God. The fire of faith had completely consumed him. The message had permeated through the innermost depths of his being. The man who was so fond of well-tailored suits now wore baggy trousers. Given the freedom he would have knocked at every door, he would have shouted from the house-tops, but, denied liberty, nobody could bar his access to himself. Over his heart not even the mighty King-Emperor of India exercised any control. Mohamed Ali had already found his own freedom and he was not bitter about the slavery imposed on his country, for with the growth of self-concentrated individuals in a nation the bonds and fetters cannot but dissolve. The indomitable courage, the elimination of fear, the faith in destiny remove all obstructions on the march. Mohamed Ali, in the midst of war and despair, found in himself peace and unlimited optimism for the future. He does not shriek or complain of sorrow or grief—he has reached a creative conciliation with his surroundings and is no longer weighed down by a sense of oppression and deprivation. Under a strange and mysterious compulsion he bursts forth into poetry and most of his poetical work belongs to this period.

He was already proclaiming the truth that the murder of Husain is indeed the death of Yazid, for Islam is given a new lease of life after every Kerbela—the tyrant was being told that the worst of his tyranny could not stamp out the spirit of freedom. Mohamed Ali had left behind the tradition of formal, soulless Urdu *ghazal* and was writing poems which, being intensely personal, were truly universal in their appeal. Until his detention he was known only as a powerful writer of English prose which galvanised a whole generation of young Muslims through the columns of *Comrade*. Now for the first time he was seeking to express himself in verse, a medium more suited to the communication of feeling, a sense of wonder and mystery. In subdued dignity Mohamed Ali poured out his heart into poems which later became a source of pleasure and inspiration to others. He sent some of these poems

to a friend, an admirer and a devotee, who later published a collection with an excellent introduction.[35] But for his detention it is doubtful whether Mohamed Ali would have ever been known as Jauhar, the *nom de plume* he employed as a poet.

In November 1918, the Central Government circulated a letter to Provincial Governments seeking their advice whether dangerous prisoners such as the Ali Brothers should be released. The response was revealing.

The Government of the Punjab wrote :

'The Provincial influence of the brothers is slight and the Punjab Government have no objection to their unconditional release but His Honour suggests that it would be preferable to await the result of the enquiries by the Advisory Committee. If in spite of the evidence of their anti-British attitude which the Committee report is likely to bring forward the Government of India decide to show them clemency then their action will be all the more magnanimous.'[36]

The Government of Assam advised that an order of release 'would be appreciated as an act of grace by the Mohammedan community and could be made with safety.'[37]

The Government of N.W.F.P. favoured unconditional amnesty.

The Chief Commissioner of Delhi commented:

'As regards Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali it may legitimately be argued that, now that War with Turkey is over, there is no real justification for keeping them in confinement; and it may be argued that, now that Germany is also thoroughly beaten, the power and might of the British *Raj* have been so triumphantly vindicated that we can safely afford to be generous to our enemies and treat them as of no account; also that the time to show this is at once before the flush of victory has had time to pale.'[38]

The Government of the United Provinces responded :

35. Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

36. Telegram P. No. 4105-4-SB dated 17 November 1918. 10 R Indian Confidential Political Proceedings, India Office Library, Vol. 50.

37. Ibid., Telegram P. dated 15 November 1918.

38. Ibid., No. 0237-C Home dated 16 November 1918.

'Sir Harcourt Butler considers that the release of Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali at the present juncture would be decidedly inopportune. It is probable that they would exert all their influence to inflame Mohammedan feeling on the subject of the terms of peace, and there is no way in which once at liberty, they could be prevented from taking the line.'[39]

C.F. Andrews had earlier volunteered the following advice, in a letter to Sir William Marris, Governor of Central Provinces, in April 1919 :

'I feel quite certain that the present is the ideal time to release Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali,—rather than after the peace terms are made public,—for the following reasons :

'(1) We have to prepare Mohamedans for a shock greater even than they have feard. If, when the shock comes, we stand in the position of religious persecution, this shock will be doubly hard to bear. If, on the other hand, we have already quite recently made the Mohamedans our friends by a signal act of justice and mercy, then they will bear the shock better. The satisfaction of the Cawnpore mosque trouble made the shock of Turkey's entrance into the war comparatively innocuous. I hope for the same results, if the release of Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali comes now. But if we merely set them free after the peace terms, we should get no gratitude and perhaps deserve none.

'(2) The Government's overwhelming display of force, at the present, needs clemency as its counterpart. The Mussalmans cannot bear much longer the strain of unrelieved repression. The fanatical element in Islam is very near to an explosion. Further repression can only make the explosion more certain. Clemency now (when it cannot de mistaken for weakness) may relieve the tension of the explosive forces as it did after the Cawnpore'[40] [mosque incident].

Gandhi tendered the following advice to the Viceroy through his Private Secretary :

'I can't describe to you how much disturbed I have been over this affair of Ali brothers. It was a pleasure to see that you had grasped my point in a moment. It would be a wonderful act on the part of the Government if, without the knowledge of anybody, an order was sent for their discharge. Such a manner of discharging them would avoid all delirious demonstration that would

39. Ibid., Telegram No. 1768-F dated Lucknow, 15-16 November 1918.
40. C.F. Andrews E 264 No. 271, Vol. 22, India Office Library.

otherwise inevitably take place to receive them.

'These are some of the reasons for their discharge :

'(*a*) If they are kept interned in order that they may not do anything hostile to the Government, the idea is frustrated because they do correspond with, and otherwise send messages to, whomsoever they choose.

'(*b*) Their detention only increases their influence day after day.

'(*c*) Their detention embitters the feelings of their friends and deepens the discontent of Mohamedans in general, which the Hindus too share to a certain extent.

'(*d*) Moulana Abdul Bari Saheb is a man wielding tremendous power over thousands of Mussalmans. He is their spiritual adviser and the Government would make him theirs by releasing the brothers.

'(*e*) The brothers are, so far as I am aware, men with a strong will, of noble birth, men of culture and learning, possessing great influcence over the educated Mohamedans, open-minded and straightforward. It was a great mistake to have interned them. Surely the Government have every need of such men on their side. Lastly in my humble opinion nothing can possibly be gained by keeping them under detention.'[41]

The Government decided to wait and it was not until the end of December 1919 that Mohamed Ali was released. A friend had been unnecessarily alienated. The Intelligence Department had clouded the intelligence of the policy-makers who ought to have known better. Only a few months earlier Mohamed Ali had summed up his political creed as follows :

'Whith a firm belief in Islam as the last word in human salvation; an ardent and active sympathy for the entire Moslem fraternity; a keen desire to see the end of communal discord in India, and the commencement of an administration increasingly responsible to the people, and supremely sensitive to their needs and responsive to their aspirations ; and an abounding confidence in the view that the British connexion was a Dispensation of Provindence sent to an afflicted and distraught country for enlarging its views and ambitions, and bringing it within the orbit of modern thought and action, so that it could combine all that was good in the East with the best that the West had to offer.'[42]

41. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XV, Letter No. 192 dated 25 March 1918.

42. Written Statement (1918), Para 50.

At the same time he had reiterated his sincere belief, with obvious regrets :

'It would be false modesty if I did not assert that men like my brother, Mr. Shaukat Ali, and myself were among those who were most qualified to advise Government on so thorny a question, and instead of being interned along with Moulana Abul Kalam Saheb Azad, and Syed Fazlul Hasan Saheb Hasrat Mohani, we and men like these and Moulana Abdul Bari Saheb, the great and universally respected divine of the famous house of the Firangi Mahal, Dr. Ansari, the Hon'ble the Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad and the Hon'ble Mr. Mazharul Haq should have been consulted by Government during the protracted crisis of dipolmatic negotiations with Turkey and the war that followed their failure. And even today, we humbly claim that such men as I have named are by far the safest guides in all that I had given in May 1914, is as sound a piece of advice today as it ever was, and nothing could show our desire to assist Government better than such a sincere and earnest warning.'[43]

But now it was no use crying over spilt milk. The damage had been done. The lines that years of internment and injustice had left behind were furrows too deep to be obliterated.

43. Ibid., p. 31.

Chapter Six

WAR WITH TURKEY: REACTIONS IN INDIA

[1915–1919]

Sympathy for Turkey—Sneaking Admiration for Germany—The Danger of Pan-Islam as Seen in England—British War Aims in Turkey—Defeat and Humiliation of Turkey—The Rise of Mustafa Kemal Pasha—The Reaction of Ulema in India—Mahmud Hasan's Contacts with Afghanistan—Ubaidullah Sindhi's Role—British Arab Policy and the Revolt of Sharif Husain—Reactions of Indian Muslims to the Revolt in Hejaz—Their Stand on the Question of Holy Places and Khilafat—The Silk Letter Case—Muslims Formulate for the First Time Their Demands on Khilafat

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WITH Turkey jumping into the fray on the German side, there was little hope left for the Indian Muslims, for, now, the British Government, like the rest of the Allies, was committed to a total defeat of Germany and her allies. For Great Britain the war with Turkey was not a side issue. It was an Asiatic and a Muslim power. It could not afford to fail or appear to fail in the war with Turkey. And yet in the initial stages of the campaign, the Turks were able successfully to lock up the superior British forces in Mesopotamia. The war was already at the door of India. Could Britain afford to lose Egypt and India? The threat to her predominant position in the Middle East could be easily extended to the Suez Canal and the Dardanelles. The vital nerve of the British Empire was in danger.

'England's rule in the remoter parts of the world,' wrote Professor H. Delbruck, the eminent German historian, 'is mainly based on victories won in past generations and the prestige which has grown out of them. Through her failure in this war—in particular through the reverses at the Dardanelles and in Mesopotamia —and scarcely less through the advance of the allied Russian

forces in Persia, England's prestige is shaken everywhere in Asia and Africa. The ganglion of the Empire is Egypt with the Suez Canal. If, as we may hope, Turkey emerges from this world crisis a consolidated State with a future before it; if this State provides itself with railways connecting the remote provinces and making possible the rapid concentration of all its military resources in Palestine and the Sinai peninsula; England's rule over Egypt, which she has hitherto been able to maintain with 6,000 European troops, will no longer be an impregnable fortress in the eyes of the *fellaheen* and of the whole Moslem world. If the Suez Canal is once lost, all the bonds that bind together the constituent parts of the Empire will be loosed.'[1]

Wilhelm II, the Kaiser of Germany, was proclaiming his sympathy and friendship for three hundred million Muslims who owed allegiance to the Sultan of Turkey as their Khalifah. Of these some seventy million were British subjects in India. The strain upon their loyalty was great and it increased with the growing length of the war. In India the people were loath to believe British victories. The Muslims had sympathy for Turkey while everyone had a sneaking admiration for Germany. In Afghanistan it was to Enver Pasha, who was expected to arrive at the head of 200,000 Turks, that people were looking. No one was averse to seeing British pride humbled, and humbled by an Asiatic power. In the Far East Japan was entertaining her own ambitions. People reckoned thus: Japan has beaten Russia, Russia has beaten the Turks, the Turks have beaten the British—a line of argument which gave little comfort to those that governed India and wished to continue to do so on the basis of clear superiority. Someone in the India Office objected to the 'indiscriminate eulogy of the exploits of the Indian troops in France'[2] for fear this may give ideas to the people in India that the white race was after all not invincible.

To Britain the danger of what was called Pan-Islam looked

1. *Preussische Jahrbucher*, May 1916, p. 383.

2. Secret Memorandum by Political Department, India Office, on War with Turkey, No. B 233, dated 25 May 1916, p. 4.

real.

'I doubt,' wrote Sir V. Chirol, 'whether the menacing character of the Pan-Islamic propaganda has yet been sufficiently appreciated. Had it had another 10 or 20 years to extend and consolidate itself . . . it would have constituted an extremely serious danger to British power; and every scheme for dealing with the remnants of the Ottoman Empire after the war should, in my opinion, be very carefully studied from that particular point of view.'[3]

This set the British war aims in Turkey—defeat and dismemberment, a decisive defeat to destroy the centre of pan-Islam, a massive effort to arrest or divert the movement before it became too menacing. The answer was the Arab policy—fan the Arab nationalist spirit to a flame, encourage the Arab subjects of the Ottoman Empire to revolt, and pose as a friend of the Arab world. The legendary Lawrence of Arabia is a product of this policy. The existence of the Ottoman Empire had become incompatible with the vital interests of Great Britain. The only satisfactory solution was the reduction of the Ottoman Empire to such political nonentity that it would be worth nobody's while to tamper with it.

The policy was clear—a decisive defeat in the field and no quarter given on the conference table in drawing out the term of peace.

In addition to meeting British objectives, peace terms would have to satisfy Russian interests in Armenia, French interests in Syria and Cilicia, Italian interests in the region of Adana, and Greek interests on the sea board. At one time, while the war was still going on, the idea of complete partition was strongly favoured. 'To get rid of the Ottoman Empire, confining Turkish sovereignty to a petty kindom in Anatolia, securing independence to the tribal Chiefs of Arabia, and dividing among the Allied powers the rest of Asiatic Turkey.'[4]

It was considered that the Turkish Empire 'should perish root

3. Ibid., p. 3.

4. Secret Note by Under Secretary, India Office, dated 13 June 1916, p. 1, B. 234, India Office Library.

and branch'; a power, 'which has posed in the past as the champion of Islam, has kept Christendom at bay, and has held the key of the road from Vienna to the East,' must be destroyed.[5]

Luck swung over to the side of the British after they had suffered considerable reverses in the first phase of the war. It turned out that the danger of pan-Islamism was after all not so fatal. It was overrated as a motive force. Nationalism proved stronger than community or creed; the ethnic and racial differences were exploited with success. The Arabs and Syrians turned the situation to their advantage. The Persian, as it turned out, had no sympathy for the Turk. The Persian 'democrat' was incensed against the foreigner because his national independence was threatened, but this did not indicate any interest in the Turks. The *jihad* for which a cry was raised in India was definitely premature and doomed to failure. The Amir of Afghanistan's thoughts were concentrated on the salvation of his own kingdom and dynasty. Everywhere except in India the Muslims seemed in varying degrees to be inspired by nationality rather than creed, even though, as a philosophic idea, pan-Islamism attracted many Muslims of note and continues to do so even today.

The British Government was determined to ensure that a fallen Turkey 'when it is driven to take refuge in some decayed city of Asia Minor, will no longer afford a fulcrum by which apostles of pan-Islamism may hope to move the world.'[6]

AT the end of 1918 it seemed that the Sick Man of Europe was about to die at last. In July a new Sultan, Mehmed Vahideddin, a younger brother of Abdulhamid, had succeeded to the throne of Usman. The Young Turk Pashas Talaat, Enver and Jemal fled across the Black Sea on a German gunboat.

On 8 December, an Allied military administration was set up in Istanbul.

5. Ibid., p. 2.

6. Secret Memorandum by Political Department, India Office, on War with Turkey, No. B 233 dated 25 May 1916, p. 6.

On 8 February 1919, the French General Franchet d'Esperey, like Mehmed the Conqueror centuries before, rode into the city on a white horse, the gift of the local Greeks. The Arab Provinces of the Empire were already in Allied possession, and had been promised independence. Allied forces now began to threaten even the Turkish Provinces themselves. French troops advanced from Syria into Calicia and the Adana district. British forces occupied the Dardanelles, Samsun, Ayutab, and other strategic points, as well as the whole length of the Anatolian railway. On 29 April 1919, Italian troops landed at Antalya, to take possession of some of the areas assigned to them by the secret wartime agreements of the Allies.

In Istanbul the new Sultan showed a disposition to follow in the footsteps of his elder brother and to take over personal control of affairs. The Committee of Union and Progress had collapsed; its leaders had fled abroad. On 21 December the Sultan dissolved the Chamber of Deputies, and, on 4 March 1919, appointed his brother-in-law Damad Ferid Pasha as Grand Vezir.

One of the first tasks of the Sultan and his Ministers was to crush the remnants of the Young Turks. Among the new leaders in the capital even the will to independent survival seemed to have failed and political discussion centred on the form which Turkish subjection was to take, and on the relative merits of an American or a British mandate. Exhausted by eight years of almost continued warfare, the once great Ottoman Empire lay supine in defeat, its capital occupied, its leaders in flight. The country was shattered, impoverished, depopulated and demoralised.

On 15 May 1919, protected by British, French and American warships a Greek army landed at Izmir. The Turkish reaction was violent and instantaneous. On 19 May 1919, four days after the Greek landing at Izmir, Mustafa Kemal Pasha landed at the Samsun, on the Black Sea coast of Anatolia, with orders from Istanbul to supervise the disbanding of the remaining Turkish forces. Instead, he set to work at once on the double task of organising a movement and raising an army. Kemal was born in Salonika in

1881 and was junior to Mohamed Ali by three years. Orphaned at the age of seven, he was brought up by his mother, like Mohamed Ali. On 27 February 1916, he had assumed the rank of General.

Mustafa Kemal described the situation in Turkey with characteristic vigour :

'Those who had dragged the nation and the country into the Great War had thought only of saving their own lives and had fled abroad. Vahideddin, who occupied the position of Sultan and Caliph, was a degenerate who, by infamous means, sought only to guard his own person and throne. The Cabinet, headed by Damad Ferid Pasha, was weak, cowardly, and without dignity, subservient to the will of the Sultan, and ready to agree to anything that might protect him as well as their own persons.'[7]

THE Minto-Morley Reforms had made Muslim opinion a political force and had given them a corporate sense, but that opinion was still neither organised nor homogeneous. The community had kept itself aloof from the national movement. A discordant note was, however, struck by the Ulema who had a history of a struggle against an alien government. Their idealism had not entirely disappeared, and, unlike the 'respectable' elements in the political life of the Muslims, the Ulema began to explore avenues of co-operation with the 'enemies of the King'.

Maulana Mahmud Hasan, an outstanding figure in contemporary Islam in India (1850-1921), established contact with Afghanistan, where, among others, he sent, in 1915, Ubaidullah Sindhi, a religious scholar who was a man of great adventure and sincere convictions.[8]

Ubaidullah Sindhi was a fervent believer in the doctrine of *jihad*, which was one of the main motivations of his conversion from Sikhism to Islam. He was a disciple of Mahmud Hasan and had met in Delhi leaders like Mohamed Ali, Ajmal Khan and Ansari.

7. Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 240-46.

8. Ghulam Rasul Mihr, *Sarguzasht-i-Mujahidin* (Lahore, 1956), pp. 552-53.

In the tradition of Deoband, Sindhi accepted composite nationalism as a political solution for the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the British rule in India.[9]

He was a member of the Indian 'government in exile' in Afghanistan. Mahmud Hasan himself went to Mecca—the Centre of the Muslim world—to canvass support. In June 1916, the Arab policy of Great Britain had led in Hejaz to the revolt of Sharif Husain against the Turks. The Muslims of India were shocked at the revolt against the Khalifah particularly because it was supported by British warships. With British concurrence, Husain assumed the title of King of Hejaz while the Sultan of Turkey always called himself 'Servant of the Holy Places'. The Sharif was condemned by Indian Muslims for arrogating to himself the title of King, an act which was seen as an indication of his personal ambition and disloyalty to the Muslim cause.

Sharif Husain was, however, quick to obtain a *fatwa* from the Ulema in Mecca who denounced the Turks for having deposed the Caliph and Sultan of Turkey, Abdulhamid II. This cleared the way for Sharif Husain to advance his own claim to the Caliphate. Mahmud Hasan declined to sign the *fatwa*, for he did not believe that the Quraysh or any single tribe or race had the exclusive privilege to claim the Caliphate.[10]

He established contacts with the Turkish Ministers who gave a pledge that Turkey and her allies would support India's demand for independence after the war. The document based on this pledge was smuggled into India, photographed and distributed, and was found by the British Intelligence.[11]

Maulana Mahmud Hasan was arrested in Mecca and handed over to the British who interned him in Malta from 1917 to 1920.

The Arab revolt resulted in the declaration of independence by the Sharif of Mecca, and his seizure of Mecca, Jeddah and

9. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* (1967), p. 196.
10. Husain Ahmad Madani, *Naqsh-i-Hayat*, II, 282.
11. Muhammad Miyan, *Ulama-i-Haqq*, pp. 131-42.

Taif, which came to public knowledge in India in June 1916. The seizure of the holy places came as a serious shock to the Indian Muslims. A report prepared at the time in the Central Intelligence Bureau sums up their reactions as follows :

'The news was at first received with silence both by the Muhammadan press and by their public bodies. The greet mass of the Muhammadan public had not had time to realise the news and the educated classes throughout India were for a time either incredulous or too bewildered by its unexpectedness and its overwhelming importance to the Muhammadan world to express any ready comment. Many frankly disbelieved the news; others thought the incident had been grossly exaggerated and expected that the Turks would soon adjust matters in the Hedjaz, incipient risings in Yemen and Asir had before been settled; others again suggested it was an ingenious trick by which the Turks hoped to relieve scarcity in Syria and Arabia by misleading England into shipping food-stuffs to the supposed enemies of Turkey. Some, even at this early stage, jumped to the conclusion that Great Britain had instigated or intrigued with the Arabs to this end. In the meanwhile some of the English-owned newspapers had published historical or critical articles, developing the vexed question of the Khilafate with reference to the seizure of the Holy places and emphasising the permanence of the Sharif's step.'[12]

Maulana Abdul Bari of Lucknow, as President of the Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Ka'ba, sent a stronly-worded telegram to the Viceroy expressing the 'consternation and painful anxiety' caused to Mussalmans by the fear that the rising would 'convert their most sacred places into fields of slaughter and carnage'. The telegram added that 'the impudent besieger of the tomb of the Holy Prophet and his sympathisers will stand for ever condemned in the eyes of the Muslim world as enemies of Islam'. At the same time, i.e. on 26 June, an emergency meeting of the Council of the All-India Muslim League at Lucknow under the presidency of the Raja of Mahmudabad adopted the following resolution :

'The Council of the All-India Muslim League places on

12. D.I.B. Report, pp. 126-27.

record its abhorrence of the action of the Arab rebels headed by the Sharif of Mecca, whose outrageous conduct may place in jeopardy the safety and sanctity of the Holy Places of Islam in the Hedjaz and Mesopotamia and condemns them and their sympathisers as enemies of Islam.'

This was followed in quick succession on 27 June by a public meeting in Lucknow at which the resolution of the League was repeated and another passed disclaiming the announcement of the *Statesman*, an Anglo-Indian daily, that Indian Muslims had welcomed the revolt.[13]

At the eleventh annual session of the All-India Muslim League, held at Delhi on 30 and 31 December 1918, it is significant that several leading Ulema were present. Dr Ansari, Chairman of the Reception Committee, delivered a speech giving his views on the Sharif's revolt and its effect on the Khilafat which had particular weight since he had first-hand knowledge of Turkey. 'During the course of the present war,' said Dr Ansari, 'actuated by personal ambitions and selfish interests, Sharif Husain raised the standard of revolt against the unquestioned Khalifah of Islam, whom he himself had recognised as such. By doing so he not only disregarded a rule of political morality, but, according to Muslim belief and religious teaching, broke an explicit and clear commandment of God and the Prophet.' He then quoted several texts from the Qur'an, which contained a definite inducement to the murder of the Sharif such as, 'if anyone attempts to divide the unity of my people, kill him with the sword, whosoever he may be'. He went on to assert that the Sultans of Turkey had discharged the duties of Khalifah and protector of the Holy Places to the entire satisfaction of the Muslim world and that the present Sultan was the only Muslim who was capable of successfully combating the intrigues and secret machinations of non-Muslim governments. He proceeded to define the limits of the Holy Places and quoted passages from the sacred Traditions of Islam to prove that the whole of Arabia,

13. Ibid.

Palestine and Mesopotamia was included in the Jazirat-ul-Arab from which all non-Muslim influences must be removed. Appealing to the principle of self-determination, he demanded that the integrity and independence of existing Muslim States should be maintained intact, and that the Arabs of North Africa and the Tartars and Turks of Central Asia should be allowed to choose their own forms of government.

For being so candid and representative of the Muslim sentiment, Dr Ansari's address was proscribed by the Government of India.

Maulana Abdul Bari of Lucknow was the most important speaker on the resolution asking for the evacuation of the Holy Places. He began by taking exception to the Union Jack having been used in decorating the hall, saying that although it was the flag of Britain, it contained the emblem of the cross, which Muslims could not respect. In his prepared speech he discussed the question whether India was *dar-ul-Islam* or *dar-ul-Harb*, and stated that in *dar-ul-Islam* there must be complete religious liberty. If a Muslim country is attacked, the inhabitants of *dar-ul-Islam* are bound to go to its assistance. It is not clear whether the Maulana completed his syllogism by stating that because Indian Muslims were not permitted to go to the assistance of Turkey, therefore India was *dar-ul-Harb*. He quoted a saying from the Prophat, 'Remove the Jew, the Christian ond the idolator from the Holy Places at all costs,' and urged Indian Muslims to continue their efforts to secure the evacuation of the Holy Places by non-Muslims. As regards the Khilafat, he said that the Sultan of Turkey was the only rightful Khalifah and it was the duty of every Muslim to help him maintain his position. The Sharif of Mecca was a rebel and could not possibly become Khalifah.[14]

Soon after the Delhi meeting of the League, Maulana Abdul

14. Ibid., pp. 131-34

In the Muslim League, as in the Congress, the moderates had lost all control, and this was evidenced by the resignation of the Raja of Mahmudabad and Wazir Hasan, respectively President and Secretary of the League.

Bari endeavoured to secure *fatwas* on the subject of the Khilafat and the Holy Places from the Ulema, his object being to obtain an authoritative pronouncement from Muslim religious leaders in support of the views expressed by Dr Ansari in his Delhi address. The particular points on which he wanted a ruling in his favour were:

(1) It was the duty of the Muslims to appoint a Khalifah.

(2) The fact that the Sultan of Turkey did not belong to the Quraysh was no bar to his being the Khalifah and that he had been recognised as such since the Qurayshi rival was neither influential nor powerful. The Sharif of Mecca, a Qurayshi, claimed to be Khalifah but it was lawful for the non-Qurayshi Khalifah to oppose him, especially since the former was supported by infidels.

(3) The late Sultan of Turkey was Khalifah; and the Muslims were bound to obey the successor of the Khalifah (Sultan) whose duty it was to turn out the rebel Sharif from Mecca and Medina. The temporary expulsion of the Sultan under circumstances which were beyond his control, viz. that he was ousted by the infidels (English) and the Sharif, was no bar to his title of Khalifah. It was, therefore, incumbent on Muslims to assist the Sultan to retake the Holy Places.

(4) Arabia comes under the definition of 'Islamic country' and includes Syria and Mesopotamia (where Arabic is spoken). This being so, Muslims all over the world were bound to aid the Sultan of Turkey to recover them.

He ultimately succeeded in getting a *fatwa* in his favour from the Ulema, a copy of which he sent to the Viceroy.[15]

In his letter to the Viceroy, dated Delhi, the 27th April 1918, Mahatma Gandhi wrote:

'Lastly I would like to request His Majesty's Ministers to give definite assurances about Muhammadan States. I am sure you know that every Muhammadan is deeply interested in them. As a Hindu I cannot be indifferent to their cause. Their

15. Ibid., p. 137.

sorrows must be our sorrows. In the most scrupulous regard for the rights of these States and to the Muslim sentiment as to the places of worship and in your just and timely treatment of Indian claim to Home Rule lies the safety of the Empire.

'No better exposition of the case could be made. Mussalmans in India occupied a peculiarly difficult and delicate position during this war, and it does not need my statement to show with what commendable restraint they conducted themselves. The Government was engaged in a war with their brothers in faith and most painful and provoking news about their Holy Places incessantly poured in. They were not deficient in courage to give expression to their feelings during the continuance of the war but they prefered to wait till after the great conflict was over. . . . The safety and independence of the Holy Places is another question which touches Mussalmans deeply. These places are sanctified by the pious memories of their great prophets and sacred injunctions of their Holy Book, and are in fact a very considerable phenomenon in their social, political and religious life. Their present condition is causing them great anxiety and profound pain. They want to see them in truly independent Muslim hands and I urge upon the Government the recognition of their most cherished and deep-seated religious sentiment. Closely associated with this is the question of Khilafat. It is a purely religious question, the decision of which rests entirely with Mussalmans. It is a part and parcel of the Muslim faith and no kind of outside interference with its settlement will be tolerated by the Mussalmans. If all the powers of the world combine to force a Khalifa on Mussalmans, the humblest of them will not follow him. If anyone can have a right to choose a new religion for Mussalmans he can also appoint a Khalifa for them. It is not for me to point out that when the meanest nationalities and the smallest countries are being given the fullest liberty in temporal matters it will be highly detrimental to the great principles of true statesmanship which are the very basis of every civilised and good government, if Mussalmans are made to feel that it is proposed to interfere with their religious questions.'[16]

THE contacts of Indian Muslims with Kabul continued throughout the First World War in the hope that Afghanistan would play a role in establishing the Khilafat, and oppose the claims of the Sharif of Mecca. Little did the Indian Muslims realise that Amir Habibullah was in close contact with the British Government

16. Ibid., pp. 134-35.

and that their 'conspiracies' were being reported to the Viceroy. With Afghan encouragement some Indian Muslims started a campaign of recruitment to an 'Army of God,' with a view to waging a war against the British. Abul Kalam Azad was supposed to be a Lt.-Colonel and Hasrat Mohani, a Major-General in this Army. These names were alleged to be included in what was referred to as a Maulvi Ubaidullah Sindhi's Silk Letter to Maulana Mahmud Hasan, a communication which was intercepted and led to mass arrests and internments in India. One of the principal characters in this 'conspiracy' was Abul Kalam Azad who was the outstanding theoretician of the Khilafat Movement.

From a perusual of the papers in this 'Silk Letter Case' it seems clear that Abul Kalam Azad had been from the start one of the principal figures. He is listed in the 'Army of God' as a 'Lieutenant-Colonel' and, though in the intercepted Silk Letter from the latter in Kabul to Maulana Mahmud Hasan in Medina, Abul Kalam Azad is said to have become 'inactive' (owing presumably to his quasi-internment and the attentions of Government), the statements and other papers in the case show that he took a prominent part in the plan and was himself preparing to join his friend Sindhi in Kabul when the letters were discovered.[17]

One of the first practical steps in the conspiracy was the despatch, in February 1915, of a party of Lahore students to Kabul. It was Abul Kalam Azad who, in company with M. Ubaidullah Sindhi, met Abdullah, the representative of the students' party, in Delhi in January 1915, and set the seal of final encouragement on the venture.

At the interview Abul Kalam Azad is reported to have said that it was imperative to reach Turkey somehow and to have advised that the route via the frontier should be adopted; on arrival in Turkey the party would take up either army or naval service

17. Proceedings of Home Dept., June 1920, Pro. No. 519, India Office Library, Appendix I. Also see *Zafar Hassan Ki Ap Beeti*, an unpublished MS. in the possession of Professor Muhammad Sarwar of Lahore which throws a flood of light on the Silk Letter Case.

or would receive education and serve as spies or in some other capacity by which the Mussalman world and the Turkish Government would benefit.

Abul Kalam's advice seems to have decided the students to leave India.

Later in the year (about August 1915), Abul Kalam Azad was specially consulted by Maulana Mahmud Hasan of Deoband on the advisability of going to Arabia. Abul Kalam is believed to have discouraged Mahmud Hasan's expedition on the grounds that as the Turkish and German armies would soon be advancing upon India through Persia, men of the Maulana's oalibre were needed in India to encourage a rising.

Ubaidullah Sindhi left India for Kabul in August 1915. Before doing so he left a message with Ahmad Ali, his trusted messenger, for Abul Kalam Azad. The message was to the effect that Ubaidullah after reaching Kabul would endeavour to persuade the Amir to send for Abul Kalam. Meanwhile Abul Kalam was to approach Hakim Ajmal Khan to get the Amir's newswriter in Rawalpindi (Nazir Muhammad Ilam Khan) to recommend Ubaidullah to the Amir in order to procure for him a good reception.

In June 1916, Ahmad Ali was visited in Delhi by an unknown man bearing a letter from Abul Kalam Azad. The letter was merely to introduce the messenger who would give a verbal message and might be trusted. The messenger turned out to be Abul Kalam's confidential servant. The message given was to the effect that Abul Kalam Azad had now decided to go to Kabul via Sind and Quetta and that arrangements should be made through the Kandahari Pir of Tando Saindad, one Aga Husain Jan, whose name is frequently mentioned in the course of contemporary police inquiries.

It was finally decided to send word to Abul Kalam that he should make his arrangements direct with Shaikh Abdul Rahim of Sind. Abul Kalam's servant was, therefore, sent back with this message.

Abul Kalam Azad could not, however, proceed with his plans as he was externed from the United Provinces under the Defence

of India Act in November 1915, and shortly afterwards similar orders were passed by the Punjab, Delhi and Bengal governments. He was internal at Ranchi in Bihar and Orissa by the Government of India at about the same time Mohamed Ali was in detention at Chhindwara in the Central Province.[18]

The Sedition (Rowlatt) Committee's Report published in 1918 summarised the Silk Letter Case as follows:

'In August 1916 the plot known to Government as the Silk Letter case was discovered. This was a project hatched in India with the object of destroying British rule by means of an attack on the North West Frontier, supplemented by a Muhammadan rising in this country. For the purpose of instigating and executing this plan a certain Maulvi Obeidulla crossed the North West Frontier early in August 1915 with three companions, Abdulla, Fateh Muhammad and Muhammad Ali. Obeidulla is a converted Sikh and had been trained as a Maulvi in the Muslim religious school at Deoband in the Saharanpur district of the United Provinces. There he infected some of the staff and students with his own militant and anti-British ideas, and students with his own militant and anti-British ideas, and the principal person whom he influenced was Maulana Mahmud Hassan, who had long been head Maulvi in the school. Obeidulla wished to spread over India a pan-Islamic and anti-British movement through the agency of Maulvis trained in the famous Deoband school. But his plans were thwarted by the Manager and Committee, who dismissed him and some of his chief associates. There is evidence too that he got into trouble over some accounts. Maulana Mahmud Hassan, however, remained and continued to receive visits from Obeidulla. Secret meetings were held at the Maulana's house and it was reported that men from the Frontier had been received there. On September 18, 1915, Mahmud Hassan, with a certain Muhammad Mian and other friends, followed Obeidulla's example by leaving India, not however for the North, but for the Hedjaz tract of Arabia.

'Before departing, Obeidulla had started a school in Delhi, and had put two books into circulation preaching militant fanaticism to Indian Muhammadans and impressing on them the supreme duty of *jehad.* The common object of this man and his friends, including the Maulana, was to promote a great Muslim attack on India which should synchronise with a Muslim rebellion.

Obeidulla and his friends first visited the Hindustani fanatics

18. Proceedings of the Home Dept., June 1919, Pro. No. 519, India Office Library.

and afterwards proceeded to Kabul. There he met the members of a Turco-German Mission with whom he fraternised and after some time he was joined by his Deoband friend, Maulvi Muhammad Mian Ansari. This man had accompanied Maulana Mahmud Hassan to Arabia and returned in 1916 with a declaration of *jehad* received by the Maulana from the hand of Ghalib Pasha, then Turkish Military Governor of the Hedjaz. While on his way, Muhammad Mian distributed copies of this document, known as the "*Ghalib-name*," both in India and among the frontier tribes. Obeidulla and his fellow-conspirators had devised a scheme for the provisional government of India after the overthrow of British power. A certain Mahendra Pratap was to be President. This man is a Hindu of good family and eccentric character, who, at the end of 1914, was granted a passport to travel in Italy, Switzerland and France. He had gone straight to Geneva, had there met the notorious Hardayal and had been by Hardayal introduced to the German Consul. He had then proceeded to Berlin and had thence been despatched on a special mission, having apparently impressed the Germans with an exaggerated idea of his importance.

'Obeidulla himself was to be Minister of India, and Barkatulla, a friend of Krishnavarma's and a member of the American Ghadr Party, who had also travelled to Kabul via Berlin, was to be Prime Minister. Son of a servant of the Bhopal State, he had visited England, America and Japan. He had been appointed Professor of Hindustani at Tokio. He had there edited a bitter anti-British paper called "The Islamic Fraternity," which was suppressed by the Japanese authorities. He had later been dismissed from his appointment and had then joined his Ghadr friends in America.

'The Germans of the Mission, failing to achieve their object, left Afghanistan early in 1916; but the Indians remained, and the 'Provisional Government' despatched letters to both the Governor of Russian Turkestan and the Czar of Russia inviting Russia to throw over her alliance with Great Britain and assist in the overthrow of British rule in India. These were signed by Mahendra Pratap and subsequently fell into British hands. The letter to the Czar was on a gold plate, a photograph of which has been shown to us.

'The "Provisional Government" also proposed to form an alliance with the Turkish Government, and in order to accomplish this object Obeidulla addressed a letter to his old friend, Maulana Mahmud Hassan. This, together with another letter dated the 8th Ramzan (9th July 1916), written by Muhammad Mian Ansari, he forwarded under a covering note addressed to Sheikh Abdur Rahim of Hyderabad, Sind, a person who has

since absconded. Sheikh Abdur Rahim[19] was requested in the note to send on the enclosures by hand of some reliable hadji (pilgrim) to Mahmud Hassan at Mecca, or even to convey them himself if no trustworthy messenger were obtainable. We have ourselves seen the letters to Mahmud Hassan which came into British hands. They are neatly and clearly written on yellow silk. Muhammad Mian's letter mentioned the previous arrival of German and Turkish missions, the return of the Germans, the staying on of the Turks, "but without work," the runaway students, the circulation of the "Ghalib-name," the "Provisional Government," and the projected formation of an "Army of God". This army was to draw recruits from India and to bring about an alliance among Islamic rulers. Mahmud Hassan was to convey all these particulars to the Ottoman Government. Obeidulla's letter contained a tabular statement of the "Army of God". Its headquarters were to be at Medina, and Mahmud Hassan himself was to be general-in-chief. Secondary headquarters under local generals were to be established at Constantinople, Teheran and Kabul. The general at Kabul would be Obeidulla himself. The table contains the names of three patrons, 12 field marshals, and many other high military officers. Of the Lahore students, one was to be a major-general, one a colonel, and six lieutenant colonels. Most of the persons designated for these high commands cannot have been consulted as to their appointments. But the whole information conveyed by the silk letters has rendered certain precautions advisable, and these have been taken.

'In December 1916 Maulana Mahmud Hassan and four of his companions fell into British hands. They are now prisoners of war interned in a British possession. Ghalib Pasha, the admitted signer of the "Ghalib-name," is also a prisoner of war and has admitted signing a paper put before him by the Mahmud Hassan party. A translation of its prominent passages runs as follows:

'"The Muhammadans in Asia, Europe and Africa adorned themselves with all sorts of arms and rushed to join the *jehad* in the path of God. Thanks to Almighty God that the Turkish Army and the Mujahidin have overcome the enemies of Islam.... Oh Muslims, therefore attack the tyrannical Christian government under whose bondage you are.... Hasten to put all your efforts, with strong resolution, to strangle the enemy to death and show your hatred and enmity for them. It may also be known to you that Maulvi Mahmud Hassan Effendi (formely at the Deoband Madrassa, India) came to us and sought our counsel.

19. Brother of Acharya Kirplanl, a President of the Indian National Congress. He had adopted Islam.

We agreed with him in this respect and gave him necessary instructions. You should trust him if he comes to you and help him with men, money and whatever he requires." '[20]

DURING the war and earlier, Muslims in India were attached to the institution of the Khilafat and the person of the Khalifah, but they had not formulated their precise demands in this respect. There was no authoritative and representative statement of the Muslim claim, in political terms, until after the end of the war. Those who were capable of formulating such a case were interned—Abul Kalam Azad, Mohamed Ali, Hasrat Mohani, Shaukat Ali, Zafar Ali Khan and others. For the first time in the history of the movement a concrete proposal emerged from a meeting of Anjuman Ziaul Islam, held at Bombay in May 1919. The following resolution was passed in the presence of Gandhi who had earlier addressed the meeting and had pleaded for a calm, dispassionate and reasoned statement :

'Resolved that the Viceroy and Governor-General of India be equested to announce a British policy in concert with the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for India and the Prime Minister, which may be laid before the Peace Conference through the British representatives whose object would be :

(1) to settle the question of the Khilafat in accordance with the wishes of the Muslims in India ;
(2) to entrust the guardianship of the Holy Places, such as Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Najaf, Kerbela Kaxomina, Baghdad, etc., to the Khalifatul Mussalmin ;
(3) to desist from the proposed dismemberment of the Turkish Empire ;
(4) that Constantinople, which has been the seat of the Khilafat for four centuries and which is predominantly Muslim by faith and Turkish by race, must remain the capital of the Turkish Empire.

'That the fulfilment of the above questions in their entirety will bring about the restoration of normal feelings among the Muslims of India, and remove the tremendous discontent and unrest that exist, and that therefore this meeting earnestly prays that His Majesty's Britannic Government will cause a declaration to be issued at an early date in India, bearing on the question, as

20. Quoted in D.I.B. Report, pp. 122-25.

such declaration will bring forth an era of peace, calmness and tranquillity so very essential to the good and orderly governance of India.'[21]

In 1913 Abul Kalam Azad, a leading scholar of Islam, had completely rejected political co-operation with the Hindus. ' "The position of Islam," he wrote, "is so exalted that its followers must not follow Hindus in determining their political policies. The *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* (the Sraight Path) of Islam was defined by Azad as one exclusive monotheism, submitting to no authority other than of one God : fulfilling the divinely-ordained mission of the Muslims whom God had exalted as the *khayr al-umam* (the best of nations) by developing communal uprightness, self-respect, and a sense of power and strength; adhering to the principle of balance and equilibrium."

'According to this view, Muslims were the harbingers of peace; they could take up arms only in defence. They should, therefore, abstain from creating chaos or unrest, and should not wantonly disturb the Pax Britannica in India. The Islamic policy was not totalitarian or monarchical but parliamentary. Muslims should, therefore, strive to achieve a free democratic government by peacefnl and constitutional means.

'From the rigidly traditional position of regarding the Islamic *umma* as an exclusive community which cannot integrate itself with any other political group, Azad departed in 1920 when the Khilafat movement was at its height, and Mohamad Ali was carrying the Muslim elite and the masses close to the Congress. He then turned to the *sira* for a precedent for an integrated alliance with a non-Muslim community. He found that in the covenant between Muhammad and the people of Medina, including Jews and pagans, concluded in 622 A.D., Muslim as well as non-Muslim parties were described as a single community (*umma wahida*). The Prophet, in a speech ratifying the covenant, is stated to have said : "Your flesh is our flesh and

21. *Collected Works of M. Gandhi*, XV, 298-99.

your blood is our blood." '[22] The covenant, though in practice it ceased to function in relation to Jews and other non-Muslim elements in Medina, still retained, in Azad's view, validity as a precedent for other situations and in other lands in the subsequent history of Islam, and was especially pertinent to India. Later Husayn Ahmad Madani and the Ulama of Deoband used the same arguments.'[23]

22. لحمک لحمنا و دمائک دمائنا
23. Aziz Ahmad, op. cit., pp. 188-89.

Chapter Seven

KHILAFAT MOVEMENT AND THE DELEGATION TO EUROPE

[1919–1920]

The Third Afghan War and Indian Sympathy for Afghanistan—The First Khilafat Delegation to England, May 1919—Hindus Unite with Muslims against the British—Formation of the Central Khilafat Committee, September 1919—Commencemement of Gandhi's Influence over Khilafat Leaders, November 1919—Release of Mohamed Ali, 28 December 1919—Muslims Join the Indian National Congress, December 1919—Muslim League and National Congress Support Cause of Khilafat—Deputation to the Viceroy, 19 January 1920—Mohamed Ali Leads Khilafat Delegation to Europe, 1 February 1920—Delegation not Allowed to Visit Turkey—Interview with Lloyd George and Mohamed Ali's Disappointment, 19 March 1920—Official Communique on Mohamed Ali's Talks with Lloyd George and the British Slant, 21 March 1920—Reactions to the Talks in India—Meeting with Montagu, 26 March 1920—Montagu's Assessment of Mohamed Ali—Campaign of Calumny in the House of Commons, March 1920—Mohamed Ali's Reply to Allegations in the House of Commons, 12 April 1920—Another Meeting with Montagu, 4 May 1920—Public Activities of the Delegation in England—Hostile Attitude of the British Press—Finances of the Delegation—Disappointed in England the Delegation Visits Europe—Letter to Lloyd George from Paris, 11 July 1920—Contacts in France, Italy and Switzerland—Contacts with Kemal Pasha from Rome—Outline of Activities in Europe, 1 February 1920 to 13 October 1920—Announcement of Peace Terms with Turkey—Summary of Peace Terms

In February 1919, an event had occurred which proved to be of importance to India. This was the assassination of Habibullah Khan, Amir of Afghanistan, who had always been friendly towards the British. His successor, Amir Amanullah Khan, however, had no such amicable feelings. At the end of April, his Foreign Minister sent confidential instructions to the Afghan

Envoy at Simla in which it was suggested that endeavours should be made to obtain the allegiance of both Hindus and Muslims to the Amir, in return for which Afghanistan would assist them in their struggle for independence. The Envoy was directed to make inquiries from the British Government regarding the inhuman law, i.e. the Rowlatt Act, which formed the basis of Gandhi's original Satyagraha campaign. The Envoy was further instructed to insert exciting articles in the Indian newspapers and to 'speedily carry out any work which you think desirable to further the views of His Majesty which are known to you'. He was also advised to get in touch with certain anti-British elements across the border and to gain the favour of Hindus and endeavour to remove Hindu-Muslim ill-feeling.[1] Hostilities broke out between Great Britain and Afghanistan on the 9th of May and terminated about six weeks later when the Amir asked for an armistice.

In May, Maulana Abdul Bari circulated a leaflet, and a very lengthy *jehad* pamphlet came to light in the United Provinces. In this numerous quotations were made from the Qur'an, and the sayings of the Prophet were utilised to show the necessity of undertaking a religious war at that juncture.

It was at about this period that Gandhi' Satyagraha campaign had led to serious disturbances in the Punjab, originating at Delhi where a riot took place in connection with the observance of a fast ordained by him. Gandhi admitted that the Afghan War had caused him to think seriously as to his programme for the future and that the unrest on the North-West Frontier had a bearing on his plans for the fast, but, in view of insistent demands from all quarters, he had decided that the fast should be observed with the result mentioned above.

Dr Ansari recommended, at this time, loyalty to Government during the Afghan War and Hakim Ajmal Khan joined him in thanking the Delhi officials for their considerate handling

1. D.I.B. Report, p. 141.

of the riots.

In spite of the attitude of these leaders, however, the Afghan trouble and the Punjab disturbances had the effect of hardening Muslim feeling, especially in the United Provinces, against Government. Gandhi was not slow to seize this opportunity to close the Hindu-Muslim breach and, on 9 May 1919, while addressing a meeting of Muslims at Bombay, he dwelt at length on the paramount necessity of Hindu-Muslim unity.

In the middle of May 1919, Yakub Hassan of Madras who, incidentally, had married a Turkish lady, left for England having received authority in writing from the Muslims of Bombay to speak on their behalf with respect to the Khilafat question. This authority had been signed by Muhammad Jan Muhammad Chotani, a wealthy merchant, often known as Seth Chotani, as president of a mass meeting of Muslims which had taken place on 19 March. Shortly afterwards M.M. Chotani urged the pressing necessity of sending a deputation to the Viceroy to represent the religious views and sentiments of the Muslims with regard to the guardianship of the Holy Places, the Khilafat, and the threatened dismemberment of the Turkish Empire. He was supposed to have been supported in this proposal by the Aga Khan.

Hindu-Muslim friction decreased at the end of 1918 and progress towards amity continued during the following year. The effect of this was summed up by the Director, Intelligence Bureau, in September 1919 as follows:

'In March last an understanding was arranged between Mr. M. K. Gandhi and Maulana Abdul Bari to the effect that the Hindu politicians would espouse the cause of Turkey and the Muslims would refrain from slaughtering kine. Whilst the Hindu politicians have kept their word and Mr. Gandhi and his fellow-workers have done much to excite Muhammadans in the matter of the ultimate fate of the Turkish Empire, the Muhammadans have not refrained from killing kine both for food and for sacrifice. Maulana Abdul Bari has doubtless tried his best to bring round his co-religionists to his view, but his success has not been at all great or even fair. As an intelligent and fair-minded Muhammadan

explained to me the other day the slaughter of kine among Muhammadans is determined by economic considerations. Nothing that Maulana Bari can say will in this matter carry much weight with Muhammadans who as a rule are poor.'[2]

On 21 September 1919, a Muslim Conference was held at Lucknow which was remarkable for the note of despair which ran throughout the proceedings, due to the belief that nothing could save the Ottoman Empire owing to the strong anti-Turkish feeling prevalent in most European countries.

By this time Provincial Khilafat Committees had commenced to spring up. The first of these of which Muhammad Jan Muhammad Chotani was President was constituted in the Bombay Presidency. At a meeting on 11 November 1919, it changed its title to the 'Central Khilafat Committee of India, Bombay'. The aims and objects of this organisation were defined as follows:

(1) To secure for Turkey a just and honourable peace.

(2) To secure the fulfilment of the pledges given by the Right Hon'ble Mr Lloyd George in his speech of 5 January 1918, and to preserve the integrity of the Turkish Empire.

(3) With a view to securing the above objects to memorialise the British Ministers, the Viceroy and, if necessary, the President of the United States of America.

At about the same time, the Delhi Khilafat Committee, of which Hakim Ajmal Khan was President, decided to convene an all-India Khilafat conference which was held at Delhi on 23 and 24 November 1919. It was presided over, on 23 November, by Mr A.K. Fazlul Haq of Calcutta, who delivered a lengthy address. The consensus of opinion was strongly anti-British, but there were differences as to the most effective means of propaganda. Resolutions were passed to boycott the peace celebrations, to boycott British goods, to send a deputation to England and, if necessary, to America and to refuse to co-operate with

2. Ibid., p. 143.

the Government unless the Khilafat and the Holy Places were treated in accordance with Muslim desires. A sub-committee was appointed consisting of Syud Hussain, Fazlul Haq, Abdul Bari, Ajmal Khan and others to examine the question of non-cooperation further and to propose effective action.

These resolutions are of particular interest as they indicate the commencement of Gandhi's influence over the Khilafat leaders and the movement in general. He attended the meeting on the 23rd and presided over it on the 24th of November 1919. The meeting was also attended by Swami Shardhanand, a leader of the Arya Samaj who was one of the most prominent Hindus in assisting Gandhi to bring about the Hindu-Muslim *entente*, which he was afterwards to do so much to destroy by means of his Shuddhi Movement.

This brief account will, we hope, help dispel the popular belief that Mohamed Ali was the author of Khilafat agitation and that he was the founder of the Khilafat Conference, which, according to a Muslim scholar, is stated to have been founded by him in 1919.[3]

MOHAMED ALI was released on 28 December 1919. He went straight to Amritsar where the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League and the recently organised Khilafat Conference were holding their respective sessions. On the long train journey from Betul to Amritsar, the Ali Brothers were given a heroe's welcome at every stop. They were accorded a tumultuous reception in Amritsar which was agog with joy and excitement. Even Iqbal, the Poet-Philosopher of Islam, wrote a poem.[4]

3. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, p. 135.
4. Yusufi, *Life of Maulana Mohamed Ali Jauhar*, p. 301.

ہے اسیری اعتبار افزا جو ہو فطرت بلند
قطرۂ نیساں ہے زندان صدف سے ارجمند

مشک ازفر چیز کیا ہے اک لہو کی بوند ہے
مشک بن جاتی ہے ہو کر نالۂ آہو میں بند

From the railway station all roads led to the Congress meeting. Mohamed Ali was not even a member of the Congress. With his entry in the Congress began an historic phase in the history of the nationalist movement. Never was the climate of Hindu-Muslim unity so pervasive. Gandhi had cause to be happy. Mohamed Ali also attended the meetings of the Muslim League and the Khilafat Conference. At all three places he made intensely emotional speeches. The message was the same: no sacrifice was too great in the cause of Islam, and the cause of Islam at this time was identified with the cause of Turkey. The Muslim League passed a resolution declaring that all the Muslims of the world regarded Sultan Vehideddin of Turkey as the recognised Khalifah of Islam. The Khilafat Conference resolved to send a delegation to Europe to espouse the cause and ensure that justice was done to defeated Turkey in the peace talks which had not yet concluded.

On 19 January 1920, a highly influential and representative delegation comprising thirty-four members waited on Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy of India. In addition to Mohamed Ali the delegation included, among others, the President of the Khilafat Conference, Shaukat Ali; President of the Congress, Hakim Ajmal Khan; President of the Muslim League, Dr M.A. Ansari, M.K. Gandhi, Maulana Abdul Bari, the spiritual preceptor of Mohamed Ali, Abul Kalam Azad, Dr Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew who had played a leading role in the Amritsar tragedy of the year before, Hasrat Mohani, and Swami Shardhanand who was later to cause so much trouble to Muslims with his Shuddhi Movement.

For once the Hindus and Muslims of India, for various reasons of their own, were united on the demands for Khilafat. The Viceroy telegraphed home the following summary of the Address presented

ہر کسی کی تربیت کرتی نہیں قدرت مگر
کم ہیں وہ طائر کہ ہیں دام قفس سے بہرہ مند

شہپر زاغ و زغن در بند قید و صید نیست
این سعادت قسمت شہباز و شاہیں کردہ اند

to him :[5]

'Khilafat Conference considers necessary deputation to England to lay before His Majesty and Ministers clear statement of the obligations imposed on every Muslim by his faith and united wishes of Indian Muslims regarding Khilafat, Muslim control over whole Jazirat-ul-Arab, Khalifa's wardenship of Holy Places and integrity of Ottoman Empire. Necessity enhanced by present grave situation fast developing into unmistakable menace.

'After horrors and bloodshed of war lasting peace was expected at earliest possible moment, but great delay has occurred in regard to Turkey and Asia now on verge of storm which must affect Muslim world.

'At this crisis statesmen of Empire must in concluding settlement take into full account binding religious obligations and cherished sentiments of 70 million Indian Muslims and sympathies of 250 million Hindu compatriots.

'During war time these sympathies were not expressed with sufficient force and it is regretted even more that reilgious obligations were not emphasized to ruling class of alien faith. Unnecessary to discuss reasons for this omission but since Armistice clearer exposition of doctrines essential to salvation of Mussalmans has been made.

'Recognises increasing appreciation of deep Mussalman concern in Turkish settlement and thankfully acknowledges repeated representations made by Government of India and Secretary of State on their behalf to His Majesty's Government, but latter is too far removed for Indian Mussalmans to influence its opinions or preconceived ideas appreciably and British Ministers seem from their utterances disposed to consider British and Christian aspects only in making settlement.

'In these circumstances one final effort necessary to warn Imperial authorities of dangers of settlement forced on Mussalmans contrary to clearest commandments of their creed and entreat His Majesty's Government to avoid evil consequences of such a decision.

'Deputation to England only effective method of placing directly before His Majesty and Ministers and it is hoped also allied and associated nations humble but frank submissions of the binding force of Islamic obligations and the scope of Muslim aspiration.

'Recalls conditions of peace laid down by President, United States, and accepted by Khilafat and pledge of British Premier regarding Constantinople, Thrace and Turkish homelands. If these pledges unredeemed or whittled down moral prestige of Empire

5. C.P. Tel. No. 165, dated 19 January 1920, from V to SS.

will be undermined to an extent for which no territorial or political gains will compensate. Reference also made in same connection to pledges proclaimed by Lord Hardinge.

'Apart from possible non-redemption of such pledges, Mussalmans of India most deeply concerned because settlement is apparently being outlined which no Mussalman can accept without jeopardizing his eternal salvation.

'Temporal power is very essence of Khilafat and Mussalmans can never agree to any change in its character or dismemberment of its Empire.

'No kind of non-Muslim control over Jazirat-ul-Arab can be tolerated by the Islamic Faith.

'Khalifa alone can be warden of Holy places.

'The action of Mussalmans of Arabia in infringing integrity of Khalifa's dominions is condemned by rest of Muslim world. It is duty of Indian Mussalmans to remove causes of difference between Arabs and other Muslims.

'All Mussalmans are interested in seeing that principles of self-determination are applied to Muslims equally with Christians and to Asiatics equally with Europeans.

'In spite of charges to contrary based on prejudice and on bitterness of recent growth verdict of history will vindicate alike the basic toleration of Islam and essential humanity of Turks.

'Loyalty of Indian Mussalmans which has been abiding asset of British rule is mainly based on preservation of their religious freedom. Justice and expediency alike demand that no change shall be made in what is unalterable and has been unaltered for thirteen centuries of Islam, though changes may be possible in what is changeable, under which latter head Muslim sentiment may be sacrificed to Imperial requirements—though such sentiments should be considered. Requirements of Islamic law are, however, so binding that they cannot be reduced by hair's breadth to suit desires of allied powers.

'But Indian Mussalmans take their stand also on Imperial interests which necessitate that settlement should be acceptable alike to Muslims and non-Muslims of India now happily reunited. Imperial authorities should not underrate value of Islamic friendship and Indian loyalty. A settlement not acceptable to India will bring no peace and every Muslim would know no rest and could only aspire to salvation by following dictates of Islam however painful their consequences.

'Just appreciation of Islamic obligations and Muslim sentiments in this matter coupled with generous recognition of India's fitness for responsible self-Government will on contrary add immensely to power of British Empire and make world safe not only for democracy but also for God and truth.

'Once success of our mission is assured it will be our business to reassure distracted Muslims and promote peace of whole world.'

The Viceroy received the Delegation in the evening of 19 January and after midnight cabled to the Secretary of State the following summary of his reply that he had given to the Deputation:

'I explained that we had no secret information with regard to the probable nature of the decision and warned them not to place reliance on newspaper reports which were cabled out, as these in no sense represented opinions of His Majesty's Ministers. I told them that the Secretary of State is now in Paris with the Prime Minister pressing views of Indian Muslims with accustomed energy and force and decision may be received at any moment. No effort has been spared to place before those, with whom decision will rest, plea of Indian Muslims for most favourable possible treatment of Turkey. I repeated extract from my Council speech of 3rd September at Simla on the same subject and drew attention to Secretary of State's recent utterance in press interview to same effect. I thanked them for their acknowledgment of these efforts. I proceeded to explain efforts made in further detail saying that soon after the armistice a representation was made that Indian Muslim feeling was much disturbed over the Turkish peace terms, particularly with regard to the holy places in Hedjaz and the future of Constantinople and it was therefore necessary to secure full statement of their views before the Peace Conference. The Indian delegation composed of the Secretary of State, Bikaner and Sinha pressed case for favourable treatment of Turkey with unsurpassable earnestness of purpose and force of argument. The Delegation had the assistance of memorial of 1st January signed by prominent Mahomedans including Aga Khan, Sir Abbas Ali Baig, Ameer Ali and Yusuf Ali, and they were accompanied by the Aga Khan, Sahibzada Aftab Ahmad Khan, and Yusuf Ali at the hearing before the conference in May. We again cabled the same month urging importance of considering effect of settlement on Indian Muslim opinion. Since then I have been in unceasing communication privately with the Secretary of State, whose views coincide closely with my own. The matter is not one, however, for the British Cabinet only. Other Great Powers are involved. The decision of Turkey to join the enemy undoubtedly prolonged the war and increased its grievous misery. Tribunal of all Allied Powers will now pronounce judgment. Turning next to terms of address, I repeated my sincere sympathy with their difficulties and troubles. I could not admit validity of all their contentions. No advantage, however, would be gained by argumentative examination of memo-

rial by paragraphs. I fully recognise that Muslims of India feel very deeply on the subject and the occasion was not one for unprofitable controversy but for helpful cooperation.

'I promised to do whatever was possible to assist them in sending a mission, but as decision may come at any time and recognising need for speedy action I have already cabled to Secretary of State full summary of memorial as this may strengthen his hands. I expressed my profound confidence that whatever may be the decision, Mahomedans of India will remain staunch in allegiance and loyalty to the King-Emperor. They made a generous and whole-hearted response to call of Empire during the great War. Their loyatly and assistance had been of greatest value and thousands of Muslim soldiers gave their lives gallantly for India and Crown in many theatres of war. Now that victory was won, I was confident that Indian Muslims will not waver in attitude of steadfast loyalty to the King.

'I re-affirmed the previous declaration on the question of the Khilafat as matter for Mahomedans only to decide. The contention, however, that Turkey should preserve in full integrity pre-war sovereignty and dominions could not reasonably be expected to be recognised. His Majesty's Government offered to guarantee such integrity before the war, but after defeat Turkey cannot expect any more than other enemy Powers wholly to escape the consequences of the action taken by her.

'I fully realise this must be matter of grief to Indian Muslims and concluded in the following words :

'"I would however ask them to take a practical view and a long view of the situation. Let them remember that when this unhappy war broke out it was the devout wish of every Briton to maintain the old ties of friendship which bound together the British Empire and the Turkish Empire. We could so well have trodden together the same path and have emerged victorious from the struggle side by side. Unhappily those in whose hands the destinies of Turkey rested at that supreme moment chose to join our enemies. That action and its consequences have created the difficult problems which now confront us. But, as you rightly indicate in your address, there is a community of interests and a long tradition of friendship between the British and Turkish Empires. I look forward therefore to a time when our old relations with the Turkish Empire will be re-established and quickened on a basis of mutual advantage and mutual good-will. Do not let your minds be too much over-clouded by the passing shadows of today when the whole world is in a state of flux and everyone of us, of whatever class, nation or creed, feels buffeted and torn by the events it has been our lot to pass through. Take a long view. What is good will and must survive.

'"Meanwhile from the deadly struggle in which the world has been engaged the British Empire has emerged stronger than ever. Within that Empire the religion and lives and property of Muslims have been secure. Within it and beyond it there will still be an assured future for Islam and peace and prosperity as in the past, for all Muslims.

'"The future of India is now bright with promise. We are on the eve of a great experiment which if wisely guided will give India a high place among the countries of the world. For its success and for the ordered progress of this great country, enabling it to withstand the dangerous menace of social and political disorder now overshadowing the East, the fullest cooperation of Muslim India is essential.

'"Offering you my sympathy and my help in the trouble that has brought you here to-day, I claim your aid and co-operation in the great task which now calls for our united energies." '[6]

THE Khilafat Delegation led by Mohamed Ali left in an Austrian Lloyd steamer 'Trestino' which sailed from Bombay on 1 February 1920. The members of the Delegation were Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, the disciple and successor of Shibli, Syed Husain, Editor of *Independent* (Allahabad), a paper owned by Moti Lal Nehru and Abdul Kasim. Hasan Muhammad Hayat acted as its Secretary. They were given an ardent send-off at a public meeting presided over by Tilak before setting out for England.

This is how Mohamed Ali recalls the excitement of the departure so soon after his release :

'. . . and lo and behold ! before scarcely a month had passed since our release I was out on the sea travelling with three companions on what used to be an Austrian Lloyd Steamer bound for Venice. Only a few of those who are fairly familiar with our names as propagandists perhaps know how deeply we love domesticity, for all the publicity that has fallen to our share, and I must confess even my missionary zeal did not seem equal to the task of tearing myself away from my family so soon after our restoration to freedom. Strictly speaking the expression, "tearing myself away from my family" did not accurately define the position, for even the month that I spent in India after the release from Betul Jail was mostly spent in travelling across the country, with barely three or four days thrown in at Rampur, and even while there the number

6. C.P. Tel. P & R No. 30, dated 20 January 1920, V to SS.

of visitors that we received made us more or less complete strangers to the family circle itself. I learnt what baggage I was taking with me only when on board the ship my old servant, who had been my companion since my childhood and my school fellow for some time, gave me the keys of the boxes and a list of the things he had thought I would need in Europe, and it was startlingly unpleasant to realise as I did on the receipt of my first letter in England from my daughters that I had not been able to have a single meal with "my little suffragettes" even during the few days that I was at home! However, it seemed that I had been taken at my word and Europe was soon enough before my filling the pews of my Church and awaiting for the new message from the pulpit! But in reality that was not so. It was certainly not politics that had lured me this time to Europe. The impulse was purely religious and one of my companions, Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, the disciple of Shibli and the Head of the Shibli Academy of Authors, who was editing the Prophet's Life by his Master and had never taken any part in politics, was there to prove it.'[7]

There was a good deal of nervousness in the British Foreign Office when on 11 February they received a note from the India Office stating that, as indicated by the Viceroy's telegram of 2 February, the Khilafat Deputation was also to go to Turkey. Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, was emphatic that 'no such deputation will, of course, be allowed to proceed to Turkey'. Sir Arthur Hirtzel was not too sure how the Deputation could be prevented from visiting Constantinople. He thought perhaps the War Office could prevent them from landing there or deport them.

The plan of the Delegation, it was found out, was to visit Constantinople to seek an interview with the Sultan after the conclusion of their mission to England. The excitement was, therefore, premature. But nevertheless Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, agreed with Lord Curzon that steps should be taken to prevent the Deputation from obtaining passports for Turkey 'at any rate until peace has been concluded with the Ottoman Government'. The Foreign Office issued the necessary instructions.

Disembarking at Venice the Delegation dashed to London, in spite of a railway strike in France. On their arrival in London,

7. *My Life : A Fragment*, pp. 144-45.

they made straight for the House of Commons, which was debating the future of Constantinople. The debate was half way through. The Prime Minister had spoken. His antipathy to Turkey was notorious. The majority of the members who spoke in the presence of the Delegation were vitriolic, and there was little evidence of sympathy or understanding for Turkey in the House of Commons.

A discussion group of members met the Deputation in the party room in the House of Commons. George Bernard Shaw who presided over the meeting bitterly complained of Muslim bigotry. Ramsay MacDonald, who was later to become Prime Minister, was without a seat in the Parliament at this time. He was as unhelpful, if not more, than in 1913, when Mohamed Ali led a deputation to England in connection with the Cawnpore Mosque incident.

On 2 March 1920, the Delegation had an interview with Fisher, the Cabinet Minister who held charge of India in the absence of Montagu in Paris for peace talks. Mohamed Ali mentioned that after laying their case before the British and the Allied Governments they proposed to proceed to Constantinople to interview the Khalifah. 'I think,' he said, 'that this was part of their religious duty as Muhammedans' and he certainly hinted that they expected the necessary facilities to be accorded to them.[8] Fisher, in his reply, did not touch on this point. Sir Arthur Hirtzel tersely commented on the proposal: 'Until a treaty of peace has been signed and ratified, the Sultan is an enemy sovereign and Constantinople enemy territory.'[9]

And there the matter ended. The Deputation was not allowed to visit Turkey.

During the interview with the Prime Minister, Mr Lloyd George Mohamed Ali advanced the following claims:

(1) The Khilafat must be preserved with adequate temporal

8 & 9. For details of this episode see the following references: P-1139/20 380/19 V of British Foreign Office; P-2182/20 380/19 V of British Foreign Office; E-2521/139/44 India Office Library

power. After the various wars in which Turkey had recently been engaged, Muslims considered that the irreducible minimum of temporal power adequate for the defence of the Faith to be the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum*, subject to guarantees for security of life, property and opportunities of autonomous development of all communities.

(2) Mohamed Ali, therefore, was unable to agree to the independence of Arabia, the granting of which would be inconsistent with the above, but claimed that he could reconcile the Arabs with their co-religionist Turks.

(3) No control by mandate or other means should be exercised over Arabia.

(4) The Khalifah to be warden of the Sacred Harems of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem.

(5) The retention of Constantinople as a point of overwhelming sentiment. To drive the Turks thence would constitute a challenge of the modern Crusaders to Islam and European domination of the entire East, which could not be taken up by the Muslim world or the East without great peril to the British Empire.

(6) A thorough inquiry into the cause of the Armenian massacres.

The Delegation was congratulated by the Prime Minister for the moderation with which their claims had been advanced.

Lloyd George read a prepared speech and took no account of the points raised by the Deputation. He bluntly said that all vanquished powers, Muslim or Christian, would be treated exactly alike. No exception could be made in favour of Turkey. The Turks had fought against Britain and had been defeated. When Mohamed Ali wanted to say something he was interrupted, saying that he did not wish either to sit through the whole night or to engage in further debate.

The Secret Report stated:

'Mohamed Ali's speech to the Prime Minister was so obviously inspired by a Nationalist spirit, so obviously concocted as a means

of propaganda, that we are not surprised at the silence with which the Prime Minister's reply was received. It was obvious from Mohamed Ali's activities before his interview that the nature of the reply he would receive was anticipated, and that he was preparing the ground for the reception of the reply in the most unfavourable light from the British point of view. The primary object he had in view was the independence of India, more specially Mohammedan India, with the object of uniting her to a revived Islam.'[10]

Mohamed Ali was plainly unhappy with the response of the Prime Minister. In a letter to Shaukat Ali he confessed:

'What we said did not matter in the least to Mr. Lloyd George and he gave a reply which had evidently been prepared ever so long ago, partly to win the approbation of the people here, with whom the Turk's retention of Constantinople, such as it turns out to be, was unpopular and partly to give to our own toadies in India, both Muslim and Hindu, an excuse for saying that a beaten enemy like Muslim Turkey could not expect better treatment than Christian Germany and Austria. Lloyd George, as is usual with him, left out all consideration but the one or two that suited his hand, and at great length emphasised them. Of course his analogy was hopelessly wrong, and his own attitude and utterances were sufficient to disprove his assertion that there was no talk of crusade on his side. To this one-sided argument I naturally wanted to reply: but the man had been showing impatience throughout the hearing, and even with my dexterity I could not put in much under the guise of a sort of vote of thanks to him for giving us a hearing. He was so impatient throughout the reply that, without quarrelling on the spot quite violently, I could not have proceeded any further. But I made it sufficiently clear to him and to the whole world that this was not the end of the matter, and that as the Ambassadors of the nation we could convey his reply, and for our part declared that in any case our allegiance to God and His Prophet took precedence over any allegiance that we owed to any earthly sovereign. You know that I am not much of a stickler for dignity in controversy, and prefer plain speaking; but on this occasion I acquitted myself with dignity as well as outspokenness and whoever else may have mistaken our meaning, Lloyd George

10. Secret Memorandum by Political Intelligence Officer attached to India Office entitled 'The Indian Khilafat Delegation'. J & P B 361 dated 10 January 1921, p. 1.

certainly did not.'[11]

On 21 March 1920, the Secretary of State for India cabled the following summary of an official report on the talks and asked the Viceroy to release it to the press:

'Muhammad Ali in opening stated deputation had come on a religious question. Islam drew no distinction between spiritual and temporal affairs. It has always had two centres, one personal, the other local. Personal centre is Khalif as successor to Prophet and repository of traditions. Local centre is Jazirat-ul-Arab or Islamic Arabia. Islam regards Arabia not as a peninsula but as an island fourth boundary being waters of Euphrates and Tigris. For defence of faithful Khilafat must retain adequate territories, resources, etc., which may be summed up in expression "temporal power". Turkish Empire had been reduced to such low limits as result of recent wars that Moslems consider irreducible minimum of temporal power adequate for defence of faithful to be restoration of territories *status quo ante bellum*. They do not rule out such political changes within scheme of Turkish sovereignty as would guarantee and secure autonomy of various Moslem territories consistently with dignity and secure independence of state. Prime Minister asked if this signified opposition after all to declaration of Faisul as King of Arabia. Muhammad Ali expressed hope of reconciling Turco-Arab differences and of persuading Faisul that his own ambitions and those of Arabs could be entirely satisfied within scheme of Turkish sovereignty. Pressed by Prime Minister to say if he were opposed to independence of Arabia he replied in the affirmative. This would not however rule out special arrangements for autonomy. Referring to India he explained that consistently with their own desire for autonomous development they could not think of denying it to Arabs, Jews or Christians within Turkish Empire. Apart from question of temporal power Mahomedans claim that Jazirat-ul-Arab including Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia as well as Arabian Peninsula should remain inviolate and entirely in Moslem control. This is minimum demanded by religious obligation absolutely binding Mahomedans. "It does not specify that it should be Khalif's own control. Religious requirements will be satisfied even if Faisul exercises independent control there." Both this requirement and that of temporal power "may easily be satisfied if Jazirat-ul-Arab remains as before the war under direct sovereignty of Khalif." Thirdly, series of injunctions

11. Letter to Shaukat Ali dated London, 6 May 1920, pp. 3-4. India Office Library, Vol. 10.

required Khalif to be warden of three holy places of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem while overwhelming Moslem sentiment required that he should be warden of holy shrines of Najef, Kerbela, Kazimain, Samaria and "Baghdad".

'Apart from above religious obligations Moslems trust pledge that Constantinople, Thrace and Asia Minor, populations of which are overwhelmingly Moslem, should be redeemed in its entirely. "Moslems cannot tolerate any affront to Islam in keeping Khilafat as a sort of hostage in Constantinople." As regards Thrace, Turkish claims require no further argument than principle of self-determination. Same principle would entirely rule out Greek claim to Smyrna.

'Turning to question of massacres he said, "India Khilafat delegation must put on record their utter detestation of such conduct and their full symathy for sufferers whether Christians or Moslems" But if Turks are to be punished, whole question requires "impartial investigation by an international commission on which All-Indian Khilafat Conference should be adequately represented." Commission should go into question of organisation of revolutionary societies by Christian subjects of Sultan and of provocation offered to Moslem majority in region affected. Pressed by Prime Minister Muhammad Ali said that he neither denied existence of these massacres nor justified them in the least. He was "not in a position to affirm or deny anything". Prime Minister cited answer given by Turkish delegation in Paris admitting massacres. Muhammad Ali went on to ask for thorough enquiry and added, "If it establishes to satisfaction of world that Turks really have been guilty of unprovoked murders and have been guilty of these atrocities and horrible crimes, then we will wash our hands of Turks. To us it is much more important that not a single stain should remain on fair name of Islam. We want to convert the world to our way of thinking; but with what face can we go before the whole world and say we are the brethren of murderers and massacres." He argued that massacres began only in last quarter of last century after success of Russian intrigues in Balkans, etc. In any case if Turk is to be punished on assumption that his rule is a "blasting tyranny" evidence should be absolutely above suspicion. No such evidence at present exists. Even in today's *Times* you read of horrors perpetrated by these so-called innocent lambs, i.e. Armenian Christians. He urged importance of removing wrong impression from minds of millions of Moslems. There should not be least suspicion that Turkish question is being dealt with in spirit of crusaders of Europe.

'With regard to Palestine he argued that no reasonable aspiration of Jewish community was incompatible with control of above Government. Reverting to Arabs, delegation considered

that adjustment between Khalifa and Arabs practicable. Arabs may claim national independence, but they cannot forget Islam is super-national and Khilafat must be as dear to them as to Indian Mahommedans. King of Hedjaz does not claim to be Khalifa. He rebuked people who so addressed him and announced officially his desire to be called King of Hedjaz and not Amir-ul-Momin, i.e. Commander of Faith which title is reserved for Khalifa alone. Sultan of Turkey has been accepted as Amir-ul-Momin for time being, because Moslems must have strongest Musalman power at their disposal to assist them in defence of faith. In conclusion Muhammad Ali said that India Moslems were anxious for reconciliation and meant to exercise their influence which would assist in the event of a just and generous settlement with Turkey to secure future peace of world and reconciliation of Turkey with Allies. British Sovereign "has a very powerful lever in his Mahomedan subjects which should be used far more extensively and effectively than it has been in the past".

'Sayid Husain referred to Muhammad Ali's statement that Indians were opposed to Arabian independence. He explained that they opposed Faisul's declaration only because Arabia had hitherto throughout history of Islam remained under direct control of Khalif. They were not opposed to Arabian independence. On the contrary they wished very much for complete autonomy in that portion, but they wanted it to be in harmony and not in conflict with Khilafat and its claims. He mentioned that All-India Khilafat Conference was not purely an organisation. He referred to very extraordinary growth of Hindu-Moslem unity in India in recent years which reached climax when Hindus entered into present movement with them. "Here we have solid fact of Hindu-Moslem unity." British Empire is greatest Mahomedan power in the world, and if Khilafat question which affects every Moslem in India were solved in manner consonant with their religious obligations, we should have within British Empire solid union of Islam and Moslem India and for British common friend Moslem world.

'Prime Minister after commending lucid and moderate speakers said that in Paris great care was taken to consider Mahomedan representatives who came from India. Bikaner and Sinha, who themselves form part of peace delegation, repeatedly brought forward Mahomedan case, also delegations were arranged from Mahomedans, some residents of Great Britain, some from India, and at Prime Minister's request Supreme Council of Allies heard case. He would therefore like Indian Mahomedans to feel that their case had been presented with great care and force and had been listened to with conscientious care, not only by delegates of British Empire, but at the request of Allies' delegates

by Supreme Council of Allies.

'Secondly, he would like to get out of mind of every Moslem throughout Empire that we were treating Turkey on different principles from those we applied when we came to consider Christian countries. We were at war with three Christian countries and one Mahomedan country. We did not seek war with any of them. Nothing was further from our minds at the beginning of conflict with Germany than that we should have to make war with Turkey. He did not believe that we had ever before made war against Turkey, though we had fought for her many times. He referred to Crimean events of 1813. Yet Turkey, when we were engaged in most terrible struggle of our history, suddenly declared war on us. It was vital to us in that struggle to have free access to Black Sea. Lack of such access prolonged war at least two years. "Turkey suddenly slammed the gates in face of an old Ally who had always stood by her and who had no quarrel with her of any sort or kind at that time." He did not believe that France had ever before made war with Turkey. She had been on our side in Crimea supporting Turkey, yet same thing happened to France. Therefore no Mahomedan in India should imagine we entered this war against Turkey as a crusade against Islam. Nothing was further from our minds. He did not believe majority of Turkish population wanted war with Great Britain. He deeply regretted that rulers misled their country into fighting against their old allies and friends. Result was to prolong war for two years. Now Turkey, like Germany and Austria, had been beaten. Germany and Austria had paid penalty for defeat. Austria had fallen to pieces. Alsace, Lorraine and Poland had been taken from Germany, upon whom very stern and severe terms had been imposed. Both Germany and Austria are Christian countries. Therefore "it is no use talking about crusades". We are applying principle of self-determination to those countries which oppress subject peoples and provoke war to destroy liberty throughout the world. He did not want any Mahomedan in India to imagine that we were applying one principle to Christians and another to Mahomedans. Neither did he want any Mahomedans in India to imagine that we were going to abandon when we came to Turkish principles which we had ruthlessly applied to Christian countries like Germany and Austria. "I do not understand Muhammad Ali to claim indulgence for Turkey. He claims justice and justice she will get. Austria has had justice. Germany has had justice, pretty terrible justice. Why should Turkey escape?" There was no reason why we should be applying any different measure to Turkey from that which we had meted out to Christian communities of Germany and Austria. "We are not treating Turkey severely because she is Mahomedan. We are applying exactly the

same principles to her as we have applied to Austria which is a great Christian community." Principle is that of self-determination applied to Empires that have forfeited their right to rule. Arabs have claimed independence and severance from Turkish domination. "It is suggested that Arabs should remain under Turkish dominion merely because they are Mahomedans. Is not the same measure af independence and freedom to be given to Mahomedans as to Christians?"

'Turning to Thrace Prime Minister said it was very difficult to get facts, but he had before him both Turkish and Greek census about Thrace, between which there was very little differrence. According to both Mahomedan population was in considerable minority. "If that is true and principle of self-determination is to be applied, whole of Thrace would certainly be taken from Turkish rule." Same thing applied to Smyrna. After very careful investigation by impartial Committee it had been found that considerable majority of population was non-Turk and great majority undoubtedly preferred Greek rule to Turkish rule.

'Turning to the question of temporal power, Prime Minister said that question of temporal power of a spiritual head was not confined to Islam. It was one of great controversies of Christendom as well, concerning which there were wide differences of opinion among Roman Catholics themselves; "but after Pope was deprived of his temporal power his spiritual power was as great as and very likely greater than ever." He knew of sincere and zealous Mahomedans who took very different view of temporal power from that of Muhammad Ali.

'He would not enter into controversy. All he would say was "the Turk will exercise temporal power in Turkish lands. We do not propose to deprive him of Turkish lands, neither do we propose that he should retain power over lands which are not Turkish." This is the principle we are applying to Christian communities of Europe and same principle must be applied to Turk.

'As to Armenian massacres, there was no doubt about them. It is true that impartial investigation has not taken place, but that is because worst massacres of all occurred during the war and there was no one there to investigate. He had cited reply of Turkish delegation in Paris. "Their sole answer was that C.U.P. who were in power at that time and ordered massacre of Armenians had also committed crimes against Moslems and condemned to death by every means three million Mahomedans. That is no answer. It is not a question of punishment; it is a question of good Government, and whether it is eight hundred thousand Christians or three million Moslems,—a Government which cannot protect its own subjects, whether Christian or Moslem,

against wholesale massacres of that kind is not fit to govern." We were, therefore, bound in interests of civilisation to exercise some kind of control and supervision. It was quite clear that Turkish Government as at present constituted is incapable of protecting its own subjects. Prime Minister then referred to devastation and desolation under Turkish rule of Asia Minor, once the granary in the Mediterranean. He proceeded—"If Turk were a capable and efficient administrator who looked after his land well, there is not a Christian community in Europe that would not say "God bless you and prosper you" and we would not dream of interfering. We should be glad to see him work out his own faith in his own land, but I do not think that he has governed in a way which makes Islam proud of him. I will ask you to look at way in which he has done it. Is Islam really proud of Turkish dominion?

'In conclusion Prime Minister wished to give comfort to Mahomedans of India who with very few exceptions even had stood loyal by throne and Empire. There were exceptions even among Christians, and he would therefore draw no distinction to detriment of Indian Mahomedans because there were some among them who were disloyal. He gratefully acknowledged Musalmans of India who had stood by throne and Empire. "They helped us in struggle. We willingly and gladly recognise that. We recognise that they have a right to be heard in a matter which affects especially Islam. We have heard them, not merely have we heard them, but we have very largely deferred to their wishes in the matter. The settlement was very largely affected by opinion of India and especially Musalmans of India, but we cannot apply different principles in settlement of a Mahomedan country from those which we sternly applied in our settlement with Christian communities with whom we were also at war." Muhammad Ali in reply appealed that action of Turkey in entering war may have been due to alarm caused by fact that Czar of Russia, their ancient enemy, was one of Allies of Great Britain. To this Prime Minister replied that he wished to make it absolutely clear that when we entered into war we had no understanding whatever with Russia to detriment of Turkey. So that Turkey had no reason to fear anything from our having engaged in a war on side of Russia. Our war was against Germany and we had not Turkey in our minds in the least.'[12]

Mohamed Ali was not consulted about the press summary of the talks cabled to the Viceroy. In fact the agreement was that a message of about two thousand words would be sent out for the

12. C.P. P & R dated 21 March 1920, SS to V.

press by the India Office at the expense of the Delegation. Referring to the damage done by the official summary, Mohamed Ali wrote from London :

'I went several times, in spite of Syud's having been easily satisfied, to Reuter's office to make sure that their summary was an honest one. We came to know later that the I.O. itself was sending a long mesage to the Government about which Philip Kest, Lloyd George's Secretary, had never whispered a word to me. We asked for this I.O. wire, but it was not supplied to us until after its publication in India. It did not do full justice to us and surely you did not expect that; but since we had no authority for sending a press message we had to hunt out the correspondents of the *Chronicle* and the *Hindoo* to send some amplification of what was attributed to us. When at last we got hold of them it was so late that even if we had spent a pot of money on sending a long telegram it would have reached on account of cable delays then occurring only about four or five days before the transcript in print reached you by mail; and reluctantly I decided to save this waste of money in the hope that the people in India would reserve their judgment for a while.'[13]

The people in India did not reserve their judgment. There was despair and criticism, particularly from Abul Kalam Azad who was unhappy at the way Mohamed Ali was dealing with the difficult problem.

'It is not very charitable of Azad to wire as he did to Maulana Abdul Bari Sahib, who I am afraid in his usual impulsive way could not restrain himself and sent me a cable which in other circumstances, and from another man, I would certainly have resented. However, this is part of day's work, and one must not be too sensitive. I am sure you need no assurance that nothing that is at all possible would be left undone, though I am terribly handicapped on account of being single-handed in most of the work that has got to be done so far as the Delegations are concerned.'[14]

Mohamed Ali met the Secretary of State on 26 March 1920. He was slightly more happy with Montagu than with Lloyd George. Reporting on the interview, he said : 'Well, there was nothing that

13 & 14. Mohamed Ali's letter to Shaukat Ali, 6 May 1920. India Office Library, Vol. 10.

we left unsaid. We traversed the entire ground of Lloyd George's reply.' And then Mohamed Ali complains, 'We have not been very fairly treated by some friends out in India, and particularly by Azad, who could at best have based his judgment on the kind of message that Lloyd George caused to be sent to India.'[15]

In a letter written on 23 June 1920 to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, Montagu had to say this of Mohamed Ali : 'He is very vain, he is very loquacious, he has some power of debate and I believe that he is personally quite honest, in fact a man born to be used by other men if they want to.'[16]

Some interesting exchanges took place in March 1920 in the House of Commons about the person and the mission of Mohamed Ali. On 10 March an M.P., Lt.-Col. James, asked a question to the Secretary of State for India about Mohamed Ali's credentials : Is he the same individual who, on account of his revolutionary tendencies and his intimate association with the Committee of Union and Progress, was interned on his own responsibility by H.H. the Nawab of Rampur and who was subsequently interned by the Indian Government ?

Mr Fisher, President of the Board of Education, speaking on behalf of the Secretary of State, replied in the affirmative.

Col. James asked a supplementary question casting doubt on the advisability of receiving Mohamed Ali. Col. Wedgewood, M.P., came in with a question at this stage : 'Is the Right Hon. Gentleman aware that a visit of a Committee of this kind is of the utmost advantage to this Empire for men like Mohamed Ali to come here ?' The Speaker asked both M.P.s to hand in their questions at the table and the excitement subsided.[17]

On 16 March 1920, there was another reference in the House.

Lt.-Colonel James asked the Secretary of State for India whether the members of the Caliphate or Islamic Delegation now visiting this country had been officially received by representatives of the

15. Ibid., p. 5.
16. MSS. Eur D. 523, Vol. 10, C.P.
17. House of Commons Debates.

Indian Government in England; whether such a reception constituted an act of official approval of the constitution of this Delegation; and whether the Government of India would have been acting within its powers had it pointed out to the heads of the Mohamedan faith in India and in this country the sinister results liable to accrue from the inclusion of a revolutionary as the leader of this Delegation, whereby his political activities are given a religious cloak.

Mr Fisher replied : The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative; to the second, in the negative. With regard to the third part, it is, of course, within the power of the Government of India to point out anything they please.

Mr Ormsby-Gore, another M.P., asked a further question : Is it not a fact that the head of this Deputation was interned during the War for pro-German activities in India, and afterwards offered release from internment if he would take the oath of loyalty to the King Emperor, which he refused to do?

Mr Fisher replied : I believe that is, roughly speaking, a fact.

The matter did not rest there. The next day, on 17 March, another M.P., Col. Yate, repeated the question and asked whether Mohamed Ali, who is reported to have been interned in India for correspondence with the enemy during the war, has arrived in England, and, if so, has he been received at the India Office ?

When his attention was invited to the answer already given the previous day, Colonel Yate asked : Was it not the case in 1913 that Lord Grey, when Secretary of State, refused to receive this same man, and may I ask the Right Hon. Gentleman why he did not adopt the same procedure ?

Mr Fisher replied : Mohamed Ali had been already received by the Viceroy of India, and in those circumstances I thought it right to receive him here.

Colonel Wedgwood : Is he not going to be received by the Prime Minister tomorrow ?

Mr Fisher : Yes.

Sir J.D. Rees : Is he not covered by the amnesty, like almost

everyone who has offended?

Colonel Yate: Will the Right Hon. Gentleman represent to the Prime Minister that this man, who has been interned for communicating with the enemy, is not a man who should be received?

Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy: Is it not a fact that there is no truth at all in the statement that he communicated with the enemy, and is he not an ordinary agitator who has had no dealings with Germany at all? Is that not true?

Mr Fisher: I think it is true that Mohamed Ali had no dealings with Germany.

Colonel Yate: Will the Right Hon. Gentleman answer my question—whether he will represent to the Prime Minister the precedents and the conduct of this man, and that he is not a right man to be received?

Mr Fisher: I think the Prime Minister is perfectly well aware of the career of Mohamed Ali.

Colonel Yate was not to be deterred. On 24 March 1920 he raised the matter again in the House of Commons.

Colonel Yate asked whether Mohamed Ali, who has arrived in England as a member of the Indian Khilafat Deputation, was the same Mohamed Ali mentioned in paragraph 164 of the Report of the Committee appointed to investigate revolutionary conspiracies in India as concerned in the project hatched in India with the object of destroying British rule by means of an attack on North-West frontier supplemented by a Mahomedan rising in India itself; whether it was for this reason that he was interned; if not, for participation in what conspiracy was he interned?

Mr Fisher replied: The individual mentioned in paragraph 164 of the Report cited in the question is not the Mohamed Ali who is now in England as a member of the Khilafat Deputation. The latter was interned during the war for conduct tending to promote the interest of His Majesty's enemies.

Mohamed Ali wrote a long letter to the Secretary of State on

12 April 1920,[18] in the course of which he categorically denied that he had any revolutionary tendencies or ever had 'intimate association with the Committee of Union and Progress,' or was on this account 'interned on his own responsibility by H.H. the Nawab of Rampur'. He then cited in detail evidence to show that it was Sir James Meston, then Lt.-Governor of United Provinces, and not the Nawab of Rampur who was responsible for the internment. He also took exception to Mr Fisher's reply to a supplementary question asked by Ormsby-Gore on 16 March in which he had asked whether Mohamed Ali had not been interned during the War for 'pro-German activities in India, and afterwards offered release if he would take the oath of loyalty to the King Emperor'. Mr Fisher had replied : 'I believe that is roughly speaking a fact.' Mohamed Ali reiterated in his letter to the Secretary of State that he had no concern whatever with any pro-German activities and that he never refused to take the oath of loyalty to His Majesty.

The matter ended with a formal acknowledgment by the Secretary of State on 12 April 1920. It was decided not to enter into a debate with Mohamed Ali on the merits of the case.[19]

But Mohamed Ali would not take an acknowledgment for an answer. In his next interview with Montagu he pursued the matter.

The second meeting with Montagu took place on 4 May 1920. In this meeting Montagu was keen to discuss the question of the mandates but Mohamed Ali was more interested in the question of Maulana Mahmud Hasan's release from his internment in Malta and the possibility of a statement by the British Government on Mohamed Ali's credentials which had earlier been challenged in the House of Commons. The statements were indeed mischievous but nothing better could be expected from the enemies. It is surprising that Mohamed Ali devoted most of this interview to the need of a public statement clearing him of the charges levelled so irresponsibly against him by some members of the Parliament.

18. J. & P. 2433, India Office Library.

19. See Minutes by Senior officials in the India Office on file No. 1451/19, J. & P. 2433, India Office Library.

'About myself,' he reported the line that Montagu took was 'that since the amnesty had been proclaimed, . . . our liberty was now evidently no longer a danger to the public safety and bygones were bygones. But I pressed him and said that Fisher had already said that "roughly speaking" I have been interned for my pro-German activities and had refused to take the oath of loyalty which I was asked to take as a condition of my release. . . . I was entitled to a public statement being made by him that was not true. He said, "But Fisher withdrew that statement next day," to which I replied that that was not exactly the case. . . .

'I then referred to the rumours of our correspondence with the late Ameer of Kabul . . . since he suggested to me that I might get some friend in the House of Commons to ask a question on the subject, I told him the question I would get someone to ask would press for a statement on this subject, to which he replied that his reply would be that he would inquire by telegram from India. I then said that he might as well enquire now. . . .'[20]

THE principal instrument available to the Delegation for purposes of public relations was the Islamic Information Bureau in London. This Bureau was run by Pickthall, a Muslim Englishman, who later translated the Qur'an into English, Ispahani and Mushir Ahmad Kidwai. Yakub Hassan of Madras who had gone to England to propagate the cause of Khilafat had also joined its staff. By the end of 1919 the Bureau was producing *Muslim Outlook*, a weekly journal. Mohamed Ali on arrival in London found this instrument fairly rusty: 'There is the name of Islamic Bureau,' he wrote to Shaukat Ali, 'but for all practical purposes it does not exist.'[21]

Mohamed Ali led a weak delegation. Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, an outstanding scholar, could not address any public meeting in English. Syud Hussain had been virtually banished and was in no mood to make any contribution. He had fallen in love with

20. Mohamed Ali's letter to Shaukat Ali, London, 6 May 1920.
21. Ibid.

Vijay Lakshmi, a daughter of Motilal Nehru, and was about to marry her when Gandhi intervened and prevailed upon him to leave the country for six months. In his absence, however, Vijay Lakshmi was married away to a Kashmiri Brahman. No one could blame the poor Syud for his lack of enthusiasm under the circumstances.

These limitations notwithstanding, Mohamed Ali addressed several public meetings in London and the provincial cities. He met many leading public men including members of the Labour Party. He was constantly canvassing, though there was little possibility of any concrete results.

On 21 March Mohamed Ali made a forceful speech at Woking. When a summary of the speech appeared in the Press there was an uproar. Mohamed Ali, it was argued, had no right to hold out threats. Wrote *Daily Telegraph* in its issue of 24 March:

> 'It is very much to be regretted that the chief spokesman of the Indian Khilafat Delegation should have forgotten the proprieties as to employ the language he did in addressing his co-religionists in their mosque at Woking, though we welcome the assurance conveyed in the letter which we published yesterday that he had no thought of uttering a threat. But the tone of the speech to which we refer, repeated in London last night, was very different from that which we have been accustomed to expect from Indian Moslems, and it will do him and his cause no good.'

The paper said that he went so far as to say that if *status quo ante bellum* was not maintained the Indian Muslims would renounce their allegiance to Great Britain, and in the event of a war between Britain and Turkey they would fight for Turkey against England. 'This is a mischievous boasting and none the less mischievous because uttered in a mosque, and though we do not apprehend much political danger arising from threats of a *Jehad* delivered at Woking, this speech and the important interview with the Prime Minister which preceded it on Friday provide a suitable opportunity for some plain speaking respecting this particular agitation.'

Glasgow Herald commented in its issue of 23 March:

'Again, speaking on Sunday at the Woking Mosque, Mr Mohamed Ali talked about Mr. Lloyd George's frigid attitude, and declared that if Britain sought to crush the Turks then Moslems throughout the world would fight on the side of the Turks against Britain. Apart from the outstanding fact that Great Britain is not attempting to crush the Turk, but, largely in deference to Indian susceptibilities, has obtained for him greater consideration than he might have otherwise received, this is the utter rubbish, as the Shias and several other considerable Mohammedan sects loath the Turks and not acknowledge the Khilafat. But it is also very objectionable rubbish and it is very unfortunate that it should have been listened to by an audience in which, it is said, a number of English people were included.'

Yet another paper came out with the most pungent comment of all:

'It was time that these pretenders of "Indian" feeling in regard to Turkey and to the maintenance of the Ottoman Government at Constantinople should receive a lesson. They received it from the Prime Minister who on this occasion spoke with laudable firmness and precision. We think that the stand now made by Government against a pernicious agitation will mark the end of this phase. No section of the citizens can claim a right to dictate imperial policy. We imagine, moreover, that when Indian Moslems really wish to speak, in their corporate capacity, to the Imperial Government they will choose representatives of unquestionable standing and irreproachable credentials.'

The Woking speech was a subject of a question in the House of Commons where a demand was made for action against Mohamed Ali. The Government, however, stated that they did not propose to take any action. Mohamed Ali wrote a long letter to the Editors of *Daily Telegraph* and *Morning Post* on 23 March. Both published the letter which sought to place the record straight for his speech had been inaccurately reported in parts and the reports appearing in the press were generally misleading—an indication of hostility to the cause he was compaigning for.

Mohamed Ali spoke at Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Manchester meeting, in Mohamed Ali's words, was 'abomi-

nably mismanaged,'[22] in Cambridge 'it was purely Indian and Muslim affair with only four or five of the better sort of dons,'[23] but the highlight was his address to the Scarborough Labour Party Session. The *Times* reported in its issue of 24 June 1920:

'Speaking with extraordinary facility in English Mohamed Ali explained that as a member of the Caliphate delegation he had come 7,000 miles to protest against the way in which the Allies intended to treat Turkey. He asked the Conference to regard the Turks not as gentlemen, but as a man. The Caliphate delegation had been sent not only by 70 million Mussalmans who were their fellow-subjects, but by their 250 million compatriots. The question which brought them here was a religious question. Mussalmans could not allow the Caliphate to be dismembered. The Treaty with Turkey contained clause after clause which made it unacceptable to them. Mr. Lloyd George answered their protests by saying, "the Turks fought against us; we beat them, and we are going to punish them." But Mr. Lloyd George forgot that it was Indian soldiers who beat the Turks. (Cheers.) The Treaty outraged the Muslim conscience.'[24]

Among other significant speeches that he made in London were those delivered at Essex Hall on 23 March and at Kingsway Hall on 22 April 1920.[25]

'AND now about money. I do not know what you would all think of me, but I swear to you I have had no time whatever to spare for scrutinising the accounts. Hayat has been keeping them and most of the money has been paid by cheque except of course what we spend on that huge item of taxis and occasional miscellaneous items. But mere existence is expensive, and the terrible expense of a flat here and the hotel in Paris would kill us, so that I would try when I am in Paris if we could not engage a flat for Paris too, though meals still have to be paid for and the servant problem would also not be a simple one. But the most expensive item is the travelling. However, I may say that I will not allow one penny to be needlessly spent, though I will not stint any amount of expenditure to get results, we are paying part of the expenses of *India* and the entire cost which is now very heavy, of the *Muslim Outlook*.'[26]

22 & 23. Mohamed Ali's letter to Shaukat Ali, London, 6 May 1920.
24. For details of this speech see *Writings and Speeches*, p. 197.
25. For details see ibid., pp. 165-83.
26. Mohamed Ali's letter to Shaukat Ali, p. 11.

Mohamed Ali goes on to report:

'One item of expenditure that I am inclined to increase is to assist us to obtain some kind of status in daily newspapers here, for not amount of meetings can produce the effect of publicity in the Daily Press. Practically all doors are closed to us, and I am for obvious reasons opposed to anything in the nature of bribe, but I think it is only right we should assist financially any publication which is in need of assistance and throws its columns open to us. I hope to be able to write to you on the subject in greater detail later, but if you would generally authorise us to spend money in this manner, I think you would be greatly helping our work.

'I am going to wire to-day for another P. Stg. 3,000 which would suffice for us for a couple of months, I hope. Nothing could be definitely said about future expenditure, because Rome, France and America are still before us and of course we have yet to work the provinces, for which I hope I may be able to extract at least part of the money entrusted through the kindness of Mr. Pickthall to Mr. Peck.'[27]

It may be mentioned to the credit of a busy leader of a delegation that Sir Basil Thompson, Head of Scotland Yard, who kept a close watch on the Delegation reported, among other things: 'Mohamed Ali is very careful how he spends his money.'[28]

THE Delegation could not make much headway with the British Government. The odds against it were too heavy and too many. The British Government was clearly unsympathetic. The Prime Minister was personally involved in the sentiment against Turkey. The British band of Orientalists including Professor Morgoliouth were helping the Foreign Office with their propaganda; the powerful resources of the Church were at the disposal of this 'Crusade,' and in England the Arabs and the Armenians attacked the mission for its sympathy for the Turks. From the Labour Party it had received little consolation. It went to Europe in May 1920.

From Paris Mohamed Ali wrote a lengthy letter to Lloyd George on 11 July. It was a detailed criticism of the Turkish

27. Ibid., p. 13.

28. F.O. E 10670/139/44, 30 August 1920, Rd. 3181.

Peace Treaty. It covered old ground and the British Government did not find any new argument in it. They decided not to enter into further discussion on the subject with the Delegation. But the internal noting on Mohamed Ali's letter is both revealing and interesting.

Montagu noted: 'Is there not substance in the argument on pages 4 and 5?'

The argument was that the Muslims of India had no option but to declare their unconditional rejection of the peace treaty as it ran counter to the requirements of Islamic faith. Article 139 under which the Khalifah was being forced to renounce his jurisdiction over certain areas meant the abdication of Khilafat.

Mr C. C. Garbeth elucidated that the clause was drafted with reference to the claims to jurisdiction over Muslims of other states advanced by, or on behalf of, the Shaikh-ul-Islam. 'It would be arguable,' he conceded, that 'the article which restricts itself to Turkey and Turkish authority does not apply to the Caliph who owes his position not to the fact that he is a Turkish authority but to the fact that he, incidentally a Turk, is the greatest Moslem sovereign. His so-called "spiritual" jurisdiction is, therefore, not affected; the Caliph, on this hypothesis, being a Moslem, not a Turkish authority.'

The next note is by one Mr J.W. Hore who hoped that the suggestion would not be followed for it would give away the whole case. The true answer to the argument, in Mohamed Ali's letter, he suggested was that the treaty did not profess to interfere with the canons of Islam. There is no canon which lays down that the Sultan of Turkey is and always must remain the Khalifah.

This clinched the case.[29]

The Delegation had hoped to achieve a little more success in their mission in Europe. They were optimistic about enlisting sympathy in France and Italy but little is known of their contacts with the two Governments. In Paris Baron de Lousanel, the

29. P. 5438/20 380/19 V. India Office Library.

representative of the Duc d' Orleans, called on Mohamed Ali. He also claimed to represent the Vatican.[30]

The Delegation visited France, Italy and Switzerland in Europe.

The following diary of the activities of the Delegation gives some indication of their doings in France:

24 April—Meets Senators, Deputies and ex-Ministers.

25 April—Visited Taalby Abdul Aziz (Tunisian) and Mon. Chauvin, editor of *Debates*.

27 April—Visited by Longuet le Coconnier, Secretary of La France et l'Islam.

9 May—Visited the Turkish Delegation at Versailles.

10 May—Telegraphed to the Sultan.

11 May—Called at the offices of *Le Populaire*.

12 May—Called at the offices of *Le Temps* and *Le Jonrnal*.

14 May—Visited by Baron L.P. Lormain and Mon. Stoiloff.

15 May—Called on M. Leon Barthod, Deputy and well-known Anglophobe. Visit reported as of utmost importance.

16 May—Received a letter from Muhammad Riza in which Franchet D'Esperey's name occurs. Telephoned to Comité Bulgare.

17 May—Present at a Conference attended by many politicians and journalists, amongst whom were Rene le Comte, Du Menil, Thoret, General Cherfils D'Estailleur, Hardemarde, Terff, Jules Roche, Baron de Lormain, le Coconnier.

21 May—Received Lieut.-Colonel Azan.

25 and 26 May—Visited offices of *Le Populaire*.[31]

The Delegation had an interview with M. Millerand, the Prime Minister of France, on 11 August 1920. The Prime Minister politely but firmly told the Delegation to subordinate their sentiments to reason. Apparently the French Prime Minister did not give much encouragement to the Delegation which returned to England

30. Scotland Yard report W/M.C (16), dated 30 August 1920. F.O. E 10670/139/44, Public Record Office.

31. Secret Memorandum by Political Intelligence Officer attached to India Office entitled "The Indian Khilafat Delegation." J. & P. B 361, dated 10 January 1921, p. 7.

the following day.

'In the opinion of the Delegation, French interests in the Orient were largely in accord with their own; both of them were opposed to any extension of the influence and domination of England. They had, however, been greatly deceived. They found that France, or rather the French Government (note the distinction), attached so high a value to the support of England *vis-a-vis* Germany that they had perforce to become the slaves of English aspirations in the East.'[32]

In Paris Mohamed Ali established contacts with the Egyptians, Turks and the French authorities. 'We laughed most heartily,' he reported, 'when in the French Foreign Office they very politely asked us to believe that the situation was somewhat delicate for them, because that puppet of Morocco had written to them begging them not to acknowledge in any way that the Sultan of Turkey was the Khalifah, since he himself claimed to be the Commander of the Faithful not only for Morocco but for the entire Muslim world. So much for their honesty.'[33]

While in Paris, the Delegation addressed on 28 May 1920 a lengthy appeal to the Khalifah urging him to stand forth as the Champion of the Faith. They had earlier sent him a cable on 11 May, explaining the mission on which they had come to Europe, and expressing the hope that 'Your Majesty and your noble and brave distracted and divided nation' would resolutely do their duty not only by Turkey but by Islam. The letter said, 'Your Majesty will soon cease to be recognised as Khalifa. . . . If, however, Your Majesty rejects this Treaty in your capacity as a Khalifa, the Moslem world would *ipso facto* be bound to rally to your Majesty's support. . . .'

His Majesty's 'dutiful and loving children,' as the Delegation called themselves, had sadly misjudged the situation.

Mohamed Ali arrived in Rome on 23 July.

The Italian Premier, Signor Giolitti, was notified of his arrival.

32. Ibid.
33. Para 2 of Mohamed Ali's letter to Shaukat Ali.

An interview was asked for and immediately granted. The Italian Premier expressed his entire sympathy with the aims of the Khilafat mission, and said that it had never been the policy of Italy to allow a disintegration of the Turkish Empire and that the Italian Government had given and would continue to give Turkey all the help which it was in its power to give. In reply to Mohamed Ali's representation, Signor Giolitti admitted that until such time as the Oriental countries were freed from foreign yokes, there would never be permanent peace in the world. He pointed out, however, that this canker would not be got rid of merely by appealing to other powers for assistance, but that what was wanted was a combined rising on the part of Orientals themselves. Mohamed Ali explained that they were powerless owing to their poverty, ignorance and caste prejudices, and owing in particular to want of arms. Signor Giolitti replied that Italy was ready to render help, more especially to the Mohammedans if they would all unite.[34]

In an interview to the Press Mohamed Ali stated that India deserved her fate as she had been too weak, but from now onwards she intended to follow a line of her own, and to show her fixed determination of severing her connection with the British Gevernment. Her programme would be carried out in various stages. First, Indians would return all decorations conferred on them, and would renounce all British honours. If that had no effect, those who occupied Government posts would hand in their resignations. The third step would be for all troops and police to resign and leave the army and police force *en masse*. Then it would be seen whether Great Britain still found it possible to occupy Mesopotamia and Palestine, to support the Greeks in Thrace and Asia Minor, and to continue to dominate India itself. The fourth step would be the refusal to pay taxes. If none of these things succeeded, the Mohammedans, or rather the Indians, reserved to themselves the right to declare a Holy War.[35]

34. J & P. B 361 dated 10 January 1921. 35. Ibid., p. 8.

Among others in Italy Mohamed Ali saw the Pope 'who is, I understand, not without reason, apprehensive of a combination between Protestants and the Greek Churches and even the Americans. They all hope to swallow each other, and I think His Holiness does not so much object to the heathen Turk as to the orthodox or Protestant Christian, for certainly the heathen Turk has been the most tolerant of rulers—a fact evidenced by the existence even today, after centuries of Turkish rule, of small obscure Christian communities who would without doubt have been swallowed up by the peaceful penetration of the larger Christian corporations.'[36]

The British Intelligence reported that Mohamed Ali was in constant and direct touch with Mustafa Kemal who had good communications with Europe, especially Italy. Information had been received by the British Government that Mohamed Ali corresponded with the Turkish Government through the Italian diplomatic bag at Rome.[37]

Mohamed Ali was supposed to be in direct communication with Ghalib Kemali Bey—Mustafa Kemal's agent in Rome.

Mohamed Ali wrote to Mustafa Kemal from Rome in the name of Indian Muslims saying that 'in view of the certainty that a disastrous peace would be signed by the Turkish Government under coercion, the time had come for a Congress of the representatives of all parts of the Moslem world to take final measures for consolidating Islam.'

This letter was discussed in the Grand National Assembly and a Select Committee, with Mustafa Kemal as its head, was appointed to examine the proposal made.

At the meeting in Switzerland on 6 August with Talaat and other members of the C.U P., Mohamed Ali stated that he approved the tactics of Mustafa Kemal; his plan of campaign could not fail to complicate things still further for England in

36. Para 3 of Mohamed Ali's letter to Shaukat Ali, pp. 1-2.
37. J & P. B 361 dated 1 January 1921, p. 9.

the East.[38]

Mohamed Ali arrived at the Hotel des Alpes Territet in Switzerland on or about 31 July. A dinner was given at Territet in honour of the Delegation presided over by Fuad Selim Bey, formerly Turkish Minister at Berne. Twenty people were present, among whom were Dr Dehdject Bey, Haroun, the Nationalist leader, Chirin Beg, and other delegates of the Egyptian Nationalist Party. Fuad Selim eulogised the existing Mussalman solidarity. Mohamed Ali affirmed that the Indians were prepared for every sacrifice on behalf of the Mussalmans of Egypt and Turkey.

Immediately on arrival at the Hotel des Alpes Territet, Mohamed Ali telegraphed to Mohamed Fahmy asking him to meet him. During the meeting Mohamed Ali expressed a wish that before he left for India another meeting would be held in Switzerland about the end of August, to which Mohammedans from all over the world would come to form an international alliance. No political matters were to be introduced.[39]

Mohamed Ali was closely watched by the British Intelligence throughout his stay in England and Europe. The following diary prepared by the India Office gives an idea, in outline, of the activities of the Delegation from 1 February to 13 October:

1 February—Mohamed Ali, Maulana Syed Suleiman Nadvi, Syud Hussein, sailed for Marseille.

22 February—Landed at Venice.

29 February—Dined with Pickthall, whose help be enlisted.

2 March—Received by Mr Fisher on behalf of the Secretary of State for India.

5 March—Spoke at 3, Campden Hill Road. 'If opponent uses force to crush the Muslems by superior arms these Muslems must draw the sword and fight to the last.'

8 March—Lunched with Captain Bennet, who is very friendly with Amir Ali, and responsible for pro-Turkish advertisements in the Press. Spoke at meeting of Minerva Cafe, concluded his speech

38. Ibid., p. 3.

39. Ibid.

with threat of force against force. Discussion Bolshevism and Nationalism.

15 March—Left for Curzon Hotel.

17 March—Present at formation of the 'Persian Association'.

19 March—Interview with the Prime Minister.

21 March—At the Woking Mosque.

30 March—Visited Labour Executive, but interview not very encouraging.

31 March—Two hours with George Lansbury.

13 April—Left London for Paris.

15 April—Interview with Longuet at office of *Le Populaire*.

22 April—Meeting in the Kingsway Hall, information publishes interview with Syed Hussein.

23 April—Meeting with Pickthall.

24 April—Mohamed Ali meets Senators, Deputies, and ex-Ministers.

25 April—Visited Taalby Abdul Aziz, a Tunisian, and Mon. Chauvin, editor of *Debates*.

27 April—Visited by Longuet, le Coconnier, Secretary of La France et l'Islam. Visited by Dr Richard and Burde.

28 April—Left for Edinburgh.

29 April—Spoke at Edinburgh.

30 April—Spoke at Manchester. No longer wished to be under foreign subjugation. A king who was antagonistic to their religious convictions could not receive their homage and respect.

2 May—Letter to *Daily Telegraph*, 'The Khilafat Claim'.

8 May—Arrived Paris.

9 May—Saw members of Turkish Delegation at Versailles.

10 May—Telegram to Sultan, visited a Deputy at 10, Av. Dugnesne in Company of Mlle. Pureau.

11 May—Called at *Le Populaire* and *Le Temps*. Telegram from Tewfik, member of Turkish Delegation, telling him to address himself to Hamid Bey of the Red Crescent, Constantinople.

12 May—Called at *Le Journal*.

14 May—Visited by Baron L.P. Lormain and M. Stoiloff.

15 May—Called on M. Leon Barthod, Deputy, well-known Anglophobe. Visit of utmost importance. Telegram from Bombay, '3000 cabled International strong non-co-operation Surat movement started.'

16 May—Received a letter from M. Riza in which D'Esperey's name occurs. Telephoned to Comité Bulgare.

17 May—Present at Conference attended by many politicians and journalists. Among them Rene le Comte, Du Menil, Thoret, Gen. Cherfils D'Estailleur, Hardemarde, Terff, Jules Roche, Baron de Lormain, le Coconnier, Jean Meila.

18 May—8, Rue al Pouttach.

19 May—L'Ordre Public, called at 8, Rue de Ponthien, received Mr Haidar, Shouman, Perin.

20 May—Rained all day.

21 May—Received Lieut.-Colonel Azan.

22 May—Assisted at conference at the College de France.

23 May—Assisted at a fête at the Trocadero.

24 May—Bank holiday. Walked near hotel.

25-26 May—Visited office of *Le Populaire*.

27 May—Meeting at Salle de Societés Savantes; speeches by Lonquet, Marcel Cachin, le Coconnier. Secretary went alone to Turkish Delegation at Versailles.

29 May—Left Paris for London.

30 May—Arrived Oxford.

6 June—Conference at the Salle des Ingenieurs Civils organised by *La France* and *L'Islam*. Speeches by le Coconnier, De Kerguezec and Claude Farrere, De Mouzie, Senator.

7 June—Went to Bureau Islamique at 2.15; at 4.10 went to Palais de Justice.

8 June—Dined with M. Fealbi, took Arabic newspapers of political interest.

9 June—Went to Versailles, and at 8.50 to Salle des Indigeniens. Present at meeting held at the Salle des Indigeniens. Revision of Peace Treaty with Turkey.

11 June—Letter from Alitcha Zade Harun, confederate of Djavid Bey and Djemal Pasha, asking Mohamed Ali to meet an important personage now in Berlin, Talaat. Went to Cooks 2.30; went to 9, Quai du Quatre Septembre; 9.00 went to Salle Gaveau.

12 June—Left Paris for London on receipt of a telegram from London from Horniman, 'Very urgent. You should be here Saturday without fail.'

24 June—Left for Paris.

25 June—Meeting at Salle Wagram under auspices of the Comité France et Islam. The Peace Treaty with Turkey, and interests of France in the East. Present: M. Bourdarie, Director of Revue Indigene, M. de Mouzie, Senator, Xavier de Magollon, Deputes Le Coconnier, Pillon, Secretary of the Comité France et Islam, S. R. Bomanji.

4 July—In Paris.

7 July—Met Pertinax.

10 July—Kidwai arrives in Paris from India.

11 July—Abul Kasem and Syed Hussain left Paris for London.

23 July—Arrived in Rome. Interviewed Italian Premier and Dr Nikoli, President of the Italian Chamber.

24 July—Met Turati, Italian Socialist.

25 July—Attended meeting of League of Oppressed Nations.

30 July—Received by the Pope.

31 July—Arrived Montreux (Territet).

1 August—Meeting in his rooms.

2 August—Returned to Paris From Geneva.

4 August—(Talaat holds meeting at Lucerne. Union of C.U.P. and Nationalists complete, he says.) Versailles to see Turkish Delegation.

5 August—Returned to Geneva.

6 August—Had long interview with Talaat.

7 August—Returned to London from Paris.

11 August—Interview with M. Millerand.

12 August—Returned to England.

13 August—In England; wrote to Mr Montagu.

22 August—Members of Delegation present at Labour meeting in Trafalgar Square.

30 August—Left for Paris.

1 September—Arrived Paris.

3 September—Left for Rome.

17 September—Left Brindisi for India.

13 October—Arrived in India.[40]

The Delegation remained away from India from 1 February 1920 to 9 October 1920. During this period the peace terms with Turkey were announced on 15 May 1920.

We should conclude this chapter with a brief summary of the Peace Terms which the Allies now proposed to impose on Turkey:

(1) The frontiers of Turkey will be as already demarcated, and where necessary revised by a Boundary Commission to be created. According to this delimitation Turkey will include the Constantinople sector of Thrace and all the predominantly Turkish areas of Asia Minor.

(2) The rights and titles of the Turkish Government in Constantinople will not be affected, but the right to modify this provision is reserved in the event of the failure of Turkey faithfully to fulfil the treaty.

(3) A Commission of the Straits will have authority over all waters between the Mediterranean mouth of the Dardanelles, the Black Sea mouth of Bosphorus, and of the water within three miles of each of these mouths; also on the shores to such extent as may be necessary. The duty of the Commission will be to ensure freedom of navigation in these waters in peace and war.

(4) A scheme of local self-government will be drafted for Kurdistan, including provision for the protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans and other minorities. The League of Nations will decide later whether Kurdistan should be granted independence of Turkey, if it be proved that separation is desired by the majority of the Kurdish people.

40. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

(5) Certain portions of Smyrna are formed into a separate unit to be administered by Greece, the suzerainty of Turkey being continued for a period of years till the autonomous State of Smyrna decides its own destiny.

(6) With the exception of the Constantinople sector, Eastern Thrace is ceded to Greece, provision being made for the local self-government of the town of Adrianople.

(7) Certain portions of the Armenian districts of Turkey are added to the existing Armenian Republic, the boundary between Turkey and Armenia in certain districts being referred to the arbitration of the President of the United States, whose decision will be final thereon and on any stipulation regarding the Armenian access to the sea.

(8) Syria, Mesopotamia and Palestine are provisionally recognised as independent States, subject to administrative advice and assistance from a Mandatory Power until such time as they are able to stand alone. The mandate for Syria has been entrusted to France and those for Mesopotamia and Palestine to Britain. The mandate for Palestine will include the provision for giving effect to the declaration of 8 November 1918, regarding the establishment of a national home for Jewish people.

(9) The Hejaz is recognised as a free and independent State. The King of the Hejaz undertakes to assure free and easy access to Mecca and Medina to Muslim pilgrims of all countries.

(10) Turkey relinquishes all rights and titles over Egypt and the Sudan and Cyprus.

(11) Turkey recognises the French protectorate over Morocco and Tunisia.

(12) Turkey relinquishes her claims to certain islands in the Aegean.

(13) The military, naval and air forces at the disposal of Turkey will consist of the following: (*a*) the Sultan's bodyguard at Constantinople; (*b*) a troop of gendarmerie for the maintenance of internal order and security and the protection of minorities; (*c*) special elements for reinforcement of the gendarmerie and eventual

control of the frontiers. The bodyguard is limited to 700 and the gendarmerie with special elements to 50,000. All warships interned in Turkish ports are declared to be finally surrendered. The Turkish fleet is limited to six torpedo boats and seven sloops.

No military or naval air forces or dirigibles are to be maintained.

(14) Control will be maintained over the finances of Turkey until the discharge of her international obligations has been assured.

(15) Freedom of navigation and transit is secured.

The following ports are declared international ports, provision to be made for free zones in each : Alexandretta, Busrah, Constantinople, Dedeagatch, Haief, Hailad Pasha, Smyrna and Trebizond.

(16) In addition to the above are numerous provisions regarding (*a*) League of Nations, (*b*) protection of minorities, (*c*) restoration of abandoned property rights, (*d*) prisoners of war, (*e*) graves of Allied soldiers, (*f*) punishment of war criminals, (*g*) economic questions and concessions, (*h*) labour conventions and (*i*) antiquities.

Chapter Eight

KHILAFAT AGITATION IN INDIA

[1920]

Gandhi's Strategy—Mustafa Kemal's Views on Khilafat—The Views of Muslim Ulema in India—Programme of Non-co-operation—Khilafat Day Observed in India—Mustafa Kemal Sentenced to Death—Announcement of Turkish Peace Terms and the Consequent Dismay in Muslim Ranks—Publication of Hunter Committee's Report—Gandhi's Support of Khilafat—The Founding of National Muslim University at Aligarh—The Muttafiqah Fatwa *against Joining Government Service—The* Hijrat *Movement and Its Failure—The Nagpur Session of the Congress and the League—Gandhi Assumes Control of the Movement*

MOHAMED ALI was absent from India from 1 February to 13 October 1920. During this period the Khilafat problem had become the question of all questions in Indian politics. All other problems seemed to fade into insignificance. In the third week of January, when Gandhi joined the Khilafat Deputation, which waited upon the Viceroy, he had already conceived the resolution of non-co-operation which was so radically to change the character of the movement.[1]

With great skill and subtlety he now set about to channel the seething discontent of the Indian Muslims into an area of co-operation with the Congress which was as unprecedented as it was phenomenal. As early as 27 August 1919, when Mohamed Ali was in jail, he had carefully worked out his strategy. Writing to the Muslim divine of Firangi Mahal, Maulana Abdul Bari, Gandhi had warned: 'In the dignity of Satyagraha in action lies the future of Islam, the future of India and, parenthetically, the future of

1. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XVII, 507.

the Ali Brothers.'[2]

He was now to hammer on this theme with relentless emphasis until the distinction between Khilafat and non-co-operation withered away to the point of extinction.

The mood of Muslim India was desperate and sullen. But not everyone was so sure that the future of Islam was inextricably mixed up with the future of the Khalifah. In Turkey a tried general who was now a member of the Grand National Assembly, and was later to found the Turkish Republic, was advising his people :

'It is improper to be so occupied with the Caliphate and the Sultanate, the Caliph and the Sultan. At present our higher interests demand no mention of these. If our purpose is to declare and maintain the preservation of devotion and loyalty to the present Caliph and Sultan, this person is a traitor. He is used by the enemy against our country and nation. As for the Caliph and Sultan, the nation submitting to his commands is forced to carry out the ambitions of the enemy. A person who is a traitor or banned from using the power and authority of his position cannot be Caliph or Sultan in any case. This being so, if you say that we should depose this one and choose another in his place, the situation and conditions of today are not suitable for it, for the person to be deposed is not in the power of the nation but in the hands of the enemy. If it is imagined that the person in question could be treated as though he had never been, and an oath of allegiance taken to some other person, seeing that the Caliph and Sultan will not abdicate his rights, but, with his cabinet, will continue in office and administration as today, is the Honourable Assembly to forget its apparent purpose, and bother itself with the issue of the Caliphs? Are we to live through another period of Ali and Muaviya? In short, this question is wide, delicate and important. Its solution is not among the matters of today.'[3]

The leaders of Muslim India thought otherwise. In India Khilafat was not only the matter of today but a question of all questions, as Gandhi put it.[4] Khilafat Conferences were held all over the country. The vehemence of speeches was to be heard to

2. Ibid., Vol. XVI, Letter No. 45. 3. *The Life of Ataturk*, p. 113.

4. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XVII, Letter No. 54, dated 7 March 1926.

be believed. In Calcutta, Abul Kalam Azad presided over a Khilafat Conference in which Maulana Abdul Bari, the spiritual preceptor of Mohamed Ali, made a fiery speech. 'If there should be two claimants for the Khilafat,' he said, 'the second claimant should be beheaded, according to the direction of Islam.' He was apparently referring to the Sharif of Mecca who had revolted against the Sultan of Turkey. He said that the enemies of Islam were forty million (Britishers) and they were seventy million. Should they have to fight against them; they had no guns or cannons but they would have to try to injure them even by throwing bricks. Even if each Muslim were to throw a handful of dust at them they would be buried under the heap that would be raised. (This was an apparent reference to the small number of white rulers in India.)

The audience was moved to a high emotional pitch and the speaker broke down. Both were in tears.[5]

Shaukat Ali, Secretary of the Central Khilafat Committee, undertook an extensive tour of India but significantly omitted the Princely States. It was left to Gandhi to formulate a policy, a programme for securing for Turkey substantially the same position as she had before the War. In a Manifesto issued on 10 March 1920, from his Ashram at Sabramati, Gandhi said:

> 'The Khilafat question has now become a question of questions. It has become an Imperial question of the first magnitude. The great prelates of England and the Mohammadan leaders combined have brought the question to the fore. The prelates threw down the challenge. The Muslim leaders have taken it up. I trust the Hindus will realise that the Khilafat question overshadows the reforms and everything else. If the Muslim claim was just, apart from the Muslim scriptures, one might hesitate to support it merely on scriptural authority. But where a just claim is supported by scriptures it becomes irresistible.'[6]

He then outlined his well-known programme for non-co-operation and called for a general strike on 19 March and public

5. See Appendix E of D.I.B. Report.
6. *The Independent*, Allahabad, 12 March 1920.

expression of Muslim demands by means of one single resolution in meetings to be held all over the country. This, then, was the first Khilafat Day observed in India. He moved the only resolution at a mammoth mass meeting in Bombay. It was both a protest and a prayer. And it committed the joint movement of the Congress and the Khilafat to a policy of non-violence.[7]

The Khilafat Day was a great success and a complete triumph of Satyagraha.[8] Gandhi was willing to go to England at this time to espouse the cause of Khilafat. 'But the Viceroy did not approve and we, ourselves, are not quite ready.'[9] The matter was dropped.

The Khilafat Day in March was followed in April by a National Week (6-13 April). It was an occasion for meetings and strong speeches. The excitement was the highest in the United Provinces and Bengal. A meeting of Khilafat Committee (11-14 April) at Bombay in which Gandhi took a prominent part adopted the following plan for action by stages:

(1) All titles and honours to be relinquished.
(2) Resignations by members of Legislative Councils.
(3) Resignation of Subordinate Government servants including Police.
(4) Resignation of Superior Government servants.
(5) Withdrawal of Muslims from the Army.
(6) Refusal to pay taxes.

Gandhi explained the working of the Scheme in *Young India* of 5 May 1920.

When Khilafat agitation was at its height in the months of April and May in India, an event of great significance took place in Turkey. On 11 April 1920, the Shaikh-ul-Islam issued a *fatwa* declaring that the killing of rebels, on the orders of the Caliph, was a religious duty; the Grand Vezir published a proclamation denouncing the false representatives of the nation—a body of delegates known as the Grand National Assembly which was

7. For details of speech, see *Collected Works of M. Gandhi*, Vol. XVII, Letter No. 73, p. 99.

8. Ibid., p. 111.

9. Ibid., p. 346.

meeting in Ankara at this time. On 11 May Mustafa Kemal and other nationalist leaders were solemnly sentenced to death, in absentia, by a Court Martial in Istambul.

An yet there is not a word, not a reference, to these momentous developments in the statements and speeches of Khilafat leaders at this time.

THE Turkish Peace Terms were published on 16 May. The announcement was not a surprise ; it was a shock, a staggering blow. Muslims were simply dazed and wondered what had happened to Hardinge's pledge about the protection of the holy places. What was the worth of Asquith's word in 1914 ? What was the result of their sacrifices in the battlefields of Syria and Mesopotamia ? They had fought shoulder to shoulder with the British and Australian soldiers in the Dardanelles campaign against the Sultan of Turkey. They felt so thoroughly ashamed of themselves now. What value were they to place on the pledges of the British Prime Minister ? Lloyd George had said on 5 January 1918, 'Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of its capital or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race.' And these were not merely the thoughts of the Government, but of the whole nation, and not merely of the nation, but 'of the entire British Empire,' as the Prime Minister put it. These pledges and promises were broken. The Muslims had been betrayed—they felt completely let down. Their condition was simply pathetic.

The Prime Minister decorating General Allenby with an Order commemorating the conquest of Palestine had referred to the campaign as a Crusade. It now occurred to the Muslims that after all they had the warning in 1918—the blame was theirs if they did not take it. The Indian Muslims and the Arabs had bled on the Syrian battlefield to win a battle which made Richard I of Allenby.

The Maharaja of Bikaner and Lord Sinha had represented the Indian Muslim wishes before the Peace Conference. The Viceroy and the Secretary of State had assured them of their sympathy

and had promised all help. But the result of all these assurances, promises and pledges was now before them. The Treaty of Sevres signed on 9 August 1920 was extremely harsh ; it was far more severe than that imposed on a defeated Germany. In Turkey it was received with a national day of mourning. In India the mourning was no less poignant. The Viceroy counselled Muslims to 'bear their present trials with patience'. Violent articles appeared in the press. The peace terms were described as outrageous, a calamity. Shaukat Ali begged the Muslims to brace themselves for a life-long struggle, to eschew hasty or violent action and to organise non-co-operation movement, working strenuously with Gandhi and Hindu leaders. As a protest some resignations also took place. Mr Bhurgri resigned his seat as a Member of the Bombay Legislative Council, Mr Yakub Hussain wrote a violent letter to Lord Willingdon resigning his seat on Madras Council and the Reception Committee of the Prince of Wales. The Nizam of Hyderabad issued a *firman* fully sharing the regret expressed in the Viceroy's message in this 'our hour of trial'. He prohibited holding of meetings and demonstrations in his dominion.[10] Few titles were given up in spite of the pressure.

The Viceroy's assessment of the situation pertinently pointed out : 'The fact seems to be that even the extremist Mohammadans are reluctant to translate words into deeds. Each looks for a lead from his neighbour, and that lead is not given. A curious illustration of this was the case of Mazhar-ul-Haque (Bihar) who was selected as the person to do the act which would involve executive action by the local Government. In the end he only counselled intensive agitation for six months.'[11]

Gandhi, in a press statement, suggested :

> 'Given an adequate measure of intelligent self-sacrifice, I have no doubt that it is possible to secure justice. There is no sacred character about peace terms. They are capable of being revised.'[12]

10. C.P. Tel. P & R No. 442, 28 May 1920, V to SS.
11. Ibid., p. 513.
12. *Collected Works* of *M. Gandhi*, Vol. XVII, Letter No. 178.

In an article entitled 'Pledges Broken' published on 19 May 1920, in *Young India*, Gandhi commented:

'A solemn promise of the Prime Minister of England has been wantonly broken. . . . It is a matter of deep sorrow that the Government of India communique offers a defence of the terms, calls them a fulfilment of Mr. Lloyd George's pledge of 5th January, 1918, and yet apologises for their defective nature and appeals to the Mohamadans of India, as if to mock them, that they would accept the terms with quiet resignation.'[13]

There was a cleavage between extremists and moderates on Khilafat and non-co-operation. The moderates had their eyes on the forthcoming elections and they did not wish to get involved in a conflict with authority. There were signs of a *rapprochement* between Tilak and Gandhi, but Tilak was a dying man and it was Gandhi whose hold on Muslims was growing significantly.

To add fuel to the fire the Hunter Committee Report was published on 26 May. This was adding insult to injury. The memory of the atrocities in the Punjab was revived and provided a further incentive to public agitation against the Turkish Peace Terms. Reporting on the situation on 11 June 1920, the Viceroy wrote:

'The Hunter Report continues to be the main topic of discussion in the press . . . the extremists of the Congress party are striving hard to set on foot a bitter agitation.... Further reports on reception of Turkish Peace Terms indicate attitude of general acquiescence in many parts of the country. A meeting of 2,000 Mohammadans with Shaukat Ali in the chair was held in Bombay but only six members of the Central Khilafat Committee attended, Chotani being absent. Few Hindus were present, but no followers of Tilak. Fiery speeches were delivered. . . . Discussion of the actual terms is conspicuous by its absence. . . . One Muslim paper of Bombay made colourless comments, while others counselled loyalty. . . . It is noteworthy that at the recent Bombay meeting of the Khilafat Committee it was resolved to take up only first two stages of non-cooperation plan, the second two stages being reserved for consideration in the future. . . . Feelings

13. Ibid., Letter No. 182.

of the general mass untouched, while extremists for the most part are afraid of the lengths to which violent speeches have already run and have decided to hold no public meetings for fear of rousing passions resulting in violence.'[14]

The Viceroy reported that resentment against the Peace Terms was growing and the agitation was drifting into the hands of Maulvis. 'The difficulties of the situation,' he warned, 'are being materially increased by the general unrest, the believed progress of Bolshevism and in particular the Irish disorders.'[15]

The All-India Khilafat Conference, held at Allahabad on 2 and 3 June 1920, formally adopted a plan of action. Gandhi was present at this meeting. There were several Hindu leaders. Many delegates—even from Bengal and Madras—attended the Conference. On the first night 300 delegates attended the meeting, at which the general feeling was that non-co-operation should be adopted; but a view was also held that, while Muslims deserved sympathy, non-co-operation would not be successful, Mrs Besant, Tej Bahadur Sapru and C. Y. Chintamani opposing it. Muslims from various provinces explained at the next day's meeting how far they were ready to take up non-co-operation. The Khilafat Conference reaffirmed the movement of non-co-operation in four stages and appointed a Sub-Committee to give practical effect to the movement without further delay. The first stage was a month's notice to Viceroy with a view to revision of the Peace Terms with Turkey. The principal members of the Sub-Committee were Gandhi, Mohamed Ali, Shaukat Ali, Abul Kalam Azad, Kitchlew, Hasrat Mohani.

Commenting on the resolutions of the Khilafat Conference Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State:

'The doctrine of non-cooperation is being watered down and now developed emphasis is on moral force—of course the more extreme Mohamadan leaders are impatient and not satisfied with this, and it is said that some of them regard bloodshed as inevitable . . . but saner men are against precipitate action unless

14. C. P. Tel. No. 477, 11 June, V to SS.

15. Ibid.

opportunity is given by indiscretions on the part of Government officers.'[16]

Candhi writing about 'The Mohammedan Decision' on 6 June 1920 in *Young India* said: 'The Khilafat meeting at Allahabad has unanimously affirmed the principle of non-cooperation.' Referring to the attitude of Indian Muslims to Afghanistan, a factor which was soon to assume added importance, Gandhi wrote, 'The Mohammedan speakers gave the fullest and frankest assurances that they would fight to a man any invader who wanted to conquer India but they were equally frank in asserting that any invasion from without undertaken with a view to uphold the prestige of Islam and to indicate justice would have their full sympathy if not their actual support.' He went on to say, 'It is easy enough to understand and justify the Hindu caution.' Urging the Hindus to 'play the game,' Gandhi urged Muslims 'to take up cooperation in real earnest' as the only effective way to struggle on behalf of the honour of Islam.[17]

The representation of Central Khilafat Committee was forwarded by Gandhi to Viceroy with a letter from himself explaining his own connection with the Khilafat Movement on 22 June 1920. He asked the Viceroy to resign as a protest against the Turkish Peace Terms failing which non-co-operation would be initiated on 1 August 1920.[18]

On 7 July Gandhi sent a cable to Mohamed Ali in London:

'Respectful but firm Muslim representation influentially signed announcing resort to non-cooperation from the 1st August if Peace Terms be not revised or if the Viceroy does not heed Khilafat agitation now in His Excellency's hands. I have sent my own separate representation explaining my connection with the movement and associating myself entirely with it. In my opinion the vast majority of Muslim and Hindu masses are behind this great and just agitation for respect of Muslim religious sentiment and for ensuring fulfilment of Ministerial pledges. You may be

16. Ibid.
17. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XVII, Letter No. 211.
18. Ibid., Letter No. 225.

sure of everything possible being done on this side. I have no doubt that in this great cause God will help us if we will help ourselves.'[19]

The first of August 1920 was proclaimed the day for the inauguration of non-co-operation. On that very day the last serious rival to Gandhi's leadership in the Congress, Lokmanya Tilak, died in Bombay. The field was now absolutely clear for Gandhi. The All-India National Congress at Calcutta adopted non-co-operation as part of its programme in September. The Khilafat Conference had given it a lead much earlier. Non-co-operation was now the national programme. Gandhi insisted on acceptance of non-violence. He succeeded in persuading the Muslims much before he was able to prevail upon Hindus to accept his programme.

When Mohamed Ali returned to India in the second week of October the national policies had already been chalked out. The Congress and Khilafat had the same programme, a novelty in India, an experiment which had been conducted on a small scale in South Africa. Gandhi alone knew the technique, he was the 'expert,' as he called himself of this new and unknown game and his expertise made his leadership indispensable to the Congress and the Khilafat Committee both of which had adopted his programme with different aims and objectives. It remained to be seen whether it was the panacea of all the ills of the Hindus and Muslims.

Mohamed Ali returned home on 13 October 1920. Immediately he jumped into the fray. When he had returned from England in 1902, after his studies at Oxford, his first thoughts had turned to Aligarh. On his return from England in 1920, Aligarh again found the first place on his programme. There he went this time not to seek a job from Theodore Morrison but to make sure that Morrisons and their like were no longer able to control the affairs of the premier Muslim University. The story is best told in the words of the Vice-Chancellor whose citadel of loyalty had now been stormed

19. Ibid., Vol. XVIII, Letter No. 7.

by a distinguished old boy. Wrote Dr Zia-ud-Din Ahmad to the Viceroy on 26 October 1920:

'I very much regret that we have added one more trouble to many difficulties that Your Excellency is now facing. There exists now great unrest all over the world and comparatively India is well under control. Messrs. Gandhi, Shaukat Ali and Mohamed Ali addressed the students without permission and discussed their programme of non-cooperation with the students. Their arguments could not convince the students and they were ultimately compelled to appeal to the religious sentiments of unripe minds. They have kept up their passion by arranging religious lectures almost every other day. I appealed to the parents and old boys of the college and invited their opinion and advice. In response to my appeal about 125 parents out of the total number of 450 have so far come to the college and they have taken their boys with them, whom they will send back when more satisfactory conditions are restored. About 375 parents have expressed their strong disapproval of the propaganda and they advised their sons to keep themselves aloof from it. Meetings of old boys and parents are being held at different towns and they have expressed their resentment on the action taken by the propagandists. Mothers and female relatives of the students have arrived and they asked their student relatives to poison them before taking proposed action embodied in the resolutions of students. I wish Mr. Gandhi may have seen the miserable condition of the relatives of students and specially of female relatives, of which I have been the unfortunate witness.

'About three-fifth of the students, at their own intention, have already communicated to me in their own handwriting, that they don't agree with the resolutions and they wanted to continue their studies in the college and appear in the University examinations.

'It is unfortunate that we are the first victims of Mr. Gandhi's terrible theory of non-cooperation, but from the encouragement we have so far received, I am certain in my mind that we will win. The Trustees of the College meet tomorrow to discuss the question.'[20]

The Viceroy carries on this story in his telegram to the Secretary of State on 4 November 1920:

'Following on a brief report to the effect that Mohamed Ali and his adherents had, with help of the civil authorities, been

20. C. P. 264 (a) Letter from the Hon'ble Dr Zia-ud-Din Ahmad dated 26 October 1920 to the Viceroy.

peaceably ejected from the college, a private telegram has now been received from the Honorary Secretary giving details. It appears that the Trustees were compelled to call a meeting without full notice on the 27th ultimo by a violent letter, hitherto unpublished, which was signed by Shaukat Ali and eight others demanding by the 29th ultimo the relinquishment of Government assistance and interference and of affiliation with the Allahabad University and calling upon the Trustees and adult students to withdraw. At a meeting of the Trustees, which was held on October 27th, 62 Trustees out of 124 were present, out of whom 9 or 11 voted for non-cooperation and the remainder strongly opposed. Messages were sent by 28 others, two of which were in favour of non-cooperation and the remainder strongly condemned the action of the Ali Brothers. Mohamed Ali, his friends and about 100 students remained in the college after the meeting, the other students having been sent to their homes. The Trustees and old boys appealed to Mohamed Ali to leave but without success. A meeting, to which Hindus were admitted to scandalisation of some Mohamedans, was held in the college mosque on the 29th by Mohamed Ali, who broke open some of the rooms in the college and made a formal admission of students to the so-called National College by swearing on the Koran. Such action was in contravention of an assurance given in a published letter dated 24th October from Gandhi to the Trustees that boys would be withdrawn peacefully. The Trustees appealed to the civil authorities on the night of 30th October, as the situation was getting worse and no entreaties were availed. Early the next morning the District Magistrate stationed Police for the protection of the buildings nnd preservation of order, and accompanied by the Honorary Secretary courteously addressed Mohamed Ali, apologising for the early intrusion. Thereupon Mohamed Ali agreed to advise the students to withdraw peacefully. Mohamed Ali and his friends and a few students then went to the college mosque for morning prayers, the District Magistrate merely requesting him not to address the students in the mosque. Whereupon Mohamed Ali stated that the mosque was intended to be used for prayers only —a statement which was in direct contradiction of his action in the mosque on October 29. After prayers had been said Mohamed Ali told the students to withdraw peacefully. They had finished packing shortly after noon and their belongings were transported to bungalows and tents outside the college grounds in motor lorries, etc., which had been provided by the District Magistrate. The students then assembled, carrying a green flag and accompanied by Mohamed Ali and marched to these bungalows and tents with cries of Allah-o-Akbar. This action averted immediate danger. The Honorary Secretary, however, fears that the troubles

are only beginning, as Shaukat Ali, Mohamed Ali and the students are living close to the college and an announcement has been made by Mohamed Ali to the effect that he will start no new institution, but he is suspected of intention of training boys as revolutionaries and religious fanatics. The Trustees therefore question whether the college, which is now closed, can be re-opened so long as the activities of Mohamed Ali remain in proximity. It is also asserted that Mohamed Ali made a statement to the effect that withdrawal from the college is only temporary.'[21]

Mohamed Ali stormed this citadel of loyalty with lightening speed. He enlisted the support of the veteran Maulana Mahmud Hasan who had recently been released from internment in Malta. He was seriously ill but he left his death-bed to bless this effort. The old boys' lodge was converted into an office and admissions began to the new National Muslim University. There was no staff, no finances, no plans, only enthusiasm. The seniors began to teach the juniors. Mohamed Ali was the Rector of the University, Maulana Aslam Jairajpuri taught Islamic History, Sharaf-ud-Din Urdu, Khwajah Abdul Haye exegesis of Quran and Maulvi Muhammad Surti gave lessons in Arabic. Urdu became the medium of instruction. Elementary Hindi became essential for Muslims as elementary Urdu became essential for Hindus. Zakir Husain, one of the students who took a prominent part in this movement, was later to become the Rector of Jamia Millia Islamia —the National Muslim University—which had been founded in such extraordinary circumstances in Aligarh.[22] Gandhi and Mohamed Ali approached Dr Iqbal to take over the new institution. 'The Muslim National University calls you,'[23] wrote Gandhi on 27 November, but Iqbal did not answer the call because he did not believe that a 'composite nationhood' was the answer to the deep and fundamental differences between the two communities.

21. C. P. Tel. P. No. 875, V to SS.

22. For Mohamed Ali's ideas about the plan and programme for the University, see his articles 'National Muslim Education,' *Writings and Speeches*, pp. 413-31.

23. *Collected Works of M. Gandhi*, Vol. XVIII, Letter No. 24.

This is how Mohamed Ali described his descent on Aligarh in a letter written to a friend in Rome. The letter was one of the two intercepted by the British Government and sent to Lord Reading by Mr Montagu, the Secretary of State for India:

'Immediately on my return to India [wrote Mohamed Ali] I proceeded with my brother Shaukat Ali and Gandhi to our Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, founded by the late Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and we demanded from our co-trustees that they should give up the financial aid of Government and also refuse the exercise of its control and appealed to the students that in the event of the other trustees not complying with our demands they should leave the College.

'The trustees were not representatives of the community and were life-trustees who had always been reactionary and sycophantish. They refused to listen to us, but the students responded nobly. The Government soon after brought into force the Moslem University Act whereby the College became a University and all the money collected by the Musulmans (mostly by Shaukat who collected some two million rupees out of a total of five millions) is now vested in the old trustees and removed from their control by a more representative Moslem University Association founded by us. But nobody cares for the Government controlled University. Half the students have refused to go to it and out of these half have gone back home at last refusing to return to the Government University, though compelled by their parents under Government influence not to join the National Moslem University which we have established at Aligarh. The other half have come to us in spite of official and parental intimidations and compulsion. When the reactionary trustees refused to convert the College we proceeded to do it ourselves, though we knew that the trustees would obtain the aid of the Government to evict us. This they did and thereby damned themselves in the eyes of the whole community. We had hired private houses in the neighbourhood and put up tents and thus managed to "carry on". The organisation of this University was entrusted to me and I have so far been its chief executive official. Students from other Colleges also came to us, and before long almost all decided to suspend their usual literary studies "in the year of peaceful revolution" and got practical training in propaganda regarding the Khilafat and attainment of Swaraj (or Self-Government). A hundred of them have just left Aligarh with me and have been distributed among the various Provinces of India. Already in the North-West Frontier Province—the province bordering on Afghanistan—some have been arrested by Government and gagged under the autocratic

regulations that go under the name of law in that Province. Now my work consisted not only in providing for the boarding and lodging and instruction in various branches of knowledge and latterly in propaganda of some 200 to 250 students at Aligarh, but also in touring round the country for purposes of propaganda and national political deliberation.

'Gandhi and my brother never spend more than two nights a week in bed, travelling night and day propagating their views, collecting funds and sleeping when they can in railway trains only. I have been more fortunate but not much more than them. But my worry was greater. I was supposed to be chained to the National Moslem University, but had nevertheless to wander all over India dragging my chain along with me. The Police forcibly evicted us at the end of the month in which I landed in India and in which I addressed hundreds of thousands on tour.

'In November I was busy making arrangements for my University, yet managed to address thousands again being dragged here and there by unfortunate local workers. At the end of November I managed to marry away two of my daughters so as to be relieved of them! Yet as on account of the fear of this Government the Chief of my State, the Nawab of Rampur, has turned us out of our home (besides imprisoning for 20 years without trial a cousin and a nephew of ours). We could not have the wedding there. I had to bring the brides and the bridegrooms to a neighbouring town.

'I was too busy to attend to anything, so my wife looked after everything as best she could and I just came in as a wedding guest! In December I again travelled a lot in spite of doing teaching work at the Aligarh University, but finally went on tour by the middle December taking my wife with me to Nagpur where the final battle of non-cooperation had to be fought over again in the annual session of the Indian National Congress.

'Here, in spite of my wife getting influenza and pneumonia and being at death's door with not even a maidservant to nurse her, I did the work of my life in bringing round the Hindu leaders who had opposed Gandhi, Shaukat and the Musulmans at the Calcutta Special Session. Thank God they all came round and non-cooperation which was started by Gandhi and the Musulmans mainly for redressing the Khilafat wrong became the policy and the programme of all Nationalist Hindus as well as Musulmans and the Government suffered the final defeat. How did these Hindu leaders come round? I feel certain that they knew we were right, but they, at least most of them, did not like the personal ascendancy of Gandhi and perhaps the comparatively lesser ascendancy of his two Moslem co-workers. They had therefore opposed Gandhi at Calcutta. But in the interval between Septem-

ber and December we managed to secure so much success in the country and to win such a hold over the popular mind by our fearless and untiring work day in and day out or rather day and night that all opposition was now deemed futile. But a good deal of tact and persuasion were still needed and God gave the opportunity of my life.'[24]

From Aligarh Mohamed Ali went to Lahore in October 1920. The following extract from the unpublished Diary of Sir Muhammad Shafi throws some light on his activities immediately after his return from England :

'Sent for Sheikh Abdul Qadir, Bar-at-Law in the morning. According to him Messrs. Shaukat Ali, Mohammad Ali and Abul Kalam Azad who on arrival at Lahore with Gandhi stayed with Maulvi Ghulam Muhyuddin, Pleader (a non-co-operator), Gandhi himself staying with Sarla Devi Chawdhrani, sent for some of the leading members of the Anjuman for a consultation on Wednesday evening last (today is Sunday). Sir Zulfiqar did not go. He himself went and Chaudhri Shahab-ud-din also came. Shaukat Ali and Co. proposed that a meeting of the General Council should be called for the next day to consider non-cooperation. Shahab Din condemned non-cooperation in strong terms. They insisted on a meeting. He himself pointed out that Dr. Iqbal, General Secy., not being there, nothing could be done. A special motor was sent to bring Iqbal and on his arrival the proposal was renewed. Iqbal pointed out that it was impossible to call a meeting for the next day as no notice could be served on Moffasil members. They then proposed a meeting of the local members. Iqbal said he could not serve notice on all the members in one night. They themselves undertook to do that and a notice was written and signed by Iqbal. The next day some 22 local members (out of over 50) assembled at the Islamia College. In addition the rooms and verandahs were crowded by Shaukat Ali and Co.'s parties and students. Mohammad Ali delivered a speech and Azad a sermon quoting a text from the Quran and delivering his Fatwa that, in the face of that text, no Mohammadon could co-operate with British Government. Sheikh Abdul Qadir controverted the proposition and, though constantly interrupted by the mob, had his say. Mohammad Ali replaced to say something and then asked Dr. Iqbal what he had to say. Dr. Iqbal said that in view of the fatwa he could say nothing and agreed to the Tajweez

24. M. Ali in a letter to Dr Abdul Hamid Said in Rome. The letter has been found in Reading Papers.

(proposal) being placed before a duly convened meeting of the General Council. On that there were cries of approval from the mob. The President, Sir Zulfiqar, was then asked to express his opinion. He said that in the presence of the fatwa based on text of Quran nothing could be said by any one. On this there were again cries of approval and Mohammad Ali embraced Zulfiqar and kissed him. They then placed pen and ink before the President and asked for the proposal being reduced to writing and signed by the members present. Sheikh Abdul Qadir insisted on notes being taken. Nineteen voted in favour, and two (Abdul Qadir and Mahboob Alam) against, Maulvi Fazal Din leaving the meeting without recording his vote. A proposal was then written out asking for stoppage of grant and disaffiliation of College and signed by Sir Zulfiqar, Dr. Iqbal, Choudhri Shahab Din and Co. in all by 19 members. At 12.30, Mr. King, Commissioner of Lahore, called and stayed till 1.15 p.m. The gist of his opinion was that the situation among the Mohammadons was not serious and he hoped better sense would prevail. The really grave situation was among the Sikhs. The excitement among the rural areas was very great, the meeting of the Sikh League attended by thousands had a resolution in favour of non-cooperation and the speeches delivered were highly inflammatory. Meetings were being held in rural areas and excitement was spreading.'[25]

In November the Jamiat-ul-Ulema declared that Government service, including service in the Army, was *haram* or forbidden by Islam. The proceedings of the meeting were not published and it was not until the following year that the *Muttafiqah Fatwa*—as this decision came to be known—became public property. Various abbreviated editions appeared in print, in 1921, and the following is a paraphrase of one of them :

(1) It is unlawful to be member of Government Councils.
(2) It is unlawful to practise in Government Courts.
(3) It is unlawful to get education in Government Schools/ Colleges aided by Government.
(4) It is unlawful to keep honorary magistracy and other honorary ranks and the titles given by Government.
(5) All the Government services from which Government receives help are forbidden (*Haram*). Sepecially serving in the Army and Police is a serious sin as they are in duty bound to shoot their brothers and God says in

25. Sir Shafi's 'Diary,' dated 24 October.

> honourable Quran Surah Miraj, 'whoever will intentionally slaughter any Muslim will be punished in Hell for ever,' and the Prophet has said, 'whoever lifted weapon against Muslim would cease to be a Muslim.'

This verdict contains seals of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, M. Mufti Muhammad Kifayat Ullah of Delhi, Maulvi Azad Subhani of Cawnpore, Maulvi Muhammad Dawud Ghaznavi, Maulvi Abdul Bari of Lucknow, Maulvi Sana Ullah of Amritsar, Maulvi Azizul Rahman Mufti, Deoband School, and other great learned men of India.

MOHAMED ALI, in his letter to the Viceroy from Betul Jail at the end of 1919, had stated that in the circumstances then prevailing in the country the only course left to a self-respecting Muslim was either, following the precept of the Prophet, to migrate from the land where life had become intolerable and it had become impossible to live in accordance with the tenets of their faith, or to wage a war against such tyranny. The thought had occurred to others as well.

In April 1920, when Mohamed Ali was away in England, an Afghan Peace Delegation came to Mussoorie, a hill station in the United Provinces, to negotiate peace terms after the Third Afghan War. The British Government suspected that Mahmood Tarzi, the leader of the visiting delegation, was engaged in political discussions with the Indian leaders. Jawaharlal Nehru who was holidaying at this time at the hill station was externed on this ground. In a mosque, however, the delegation, expressed sympathy with the stand of Indian Muslims on peace terms for Turkey. The Urdu press in Delhi published reports that Amir Amanullah stood for safeguarding the integrity of the Khilafat and that he was willing to offer asylum to any Indian whom religion might drive from India. This made him a hero overnight. At Jhansi the title of Naib-ul-Khalifah was conferred on the Amir of Afghanistan.[26] The impression developed that the Amir

26. D.I.B. Report, p. 152.

was supporting the Khilafat agitation.

The Hindus spread the word that the Muslims of India were in league with Afghanistan and were making arrangements with the Amir for the conquest and liberation of India. The Central Khilafat Committee, in its manifesto issued in May 1920, referring to the widespread rumours, stated:

'In serving their religion they wish to keep the Khilafat intact. . . . But they do not desire to oust England and introduce a Muhammadan or any other power to rule over India. . . . The Mussalmans of India will fight to the last man in resisting any Mussalman power that may have designs on India.'

At a meeting held at Allahabad in June 1920, at the same time as Khilafat Conference which adopted non-co-operation as its programme, the Ulema had declared that *hijrat* was optional. But the heat of Khilafat agitation was very much on the increase. Violence of speech and large appreciative audiences were the feature of intensive propaganda. Maulvi Ataullah Shah Bokhari of Amritsar was talking of the trickery of the 'white monkeys,' Zafar Ali Khan was writing fiery articles in the *Zamindar* of Lahore, Abul Kalam Azad was exhorting Muslims to rise against Government which Gandhi, in a speech at Lahore, had dubbed as Satanic and had compared it to a dacoit.[27]

It was not surprising, therefore, that some people decided in the heat of the moment to abandon the 'Satanic' land and seek sanctuary in neighbouring Afghanistan. India was *dar-ul-Harb* and the search for *dar-ul-Islam* was stimulated by the promise of asylum held forth on behalf of the Amir of Afghanistan. A movement of migration started in the middle of 1920 in Sind from where it spread to N.W.F.P. where it produced an extraordinary effect. About twenty thousand persons after selling their land, goods and chattels marched through Khyber into Afghanistan, apparently believing that once having arrived in *dar-ul-Islam*, they would be maintained by Afghanistan for the rest of

27. P & J 1676/1920, India Office Library.

their lives.

Writing under the caption '*Hijrat* and Its Meaning' in *Young India* on 21 July 1920, Gandhi said :

'India is a continent. Its articulate thousands know what its inarticulate millions are doing or thinking. The Government and the eduated Indians may think that the Khilafat movement is merely a passing phase. The millions of Mussulmans think otherwise. The flight of the Mussulmans is growing apace. The newspapers contain paragraphs in out-of-the-way corners informing the readers that a special train containing a barrister with sixty women, forty children including twenty sucklings, all told 765, have left for Afghanistan. They are cheered en route. They were presented with cash, edibles and other things, and were joined by more muhajarin on the way. No fanatical preaching by a Shaukat Ali can make people break up and leave their homes for an unknown land. There must be an abiding faith in them. That it is better for them to leave a State which has no regard for their religious sentiment and face a beggar's life than to remain in it even though it may be in a princely manner. Nothing but pride of power can blind the Government of India to the scene that is being enacted before it.'[28]

The following picture emerges from a study of the secret political reports of this period.

Intending *Muhajirin* came to Peshawar city and registered their names with *Hijrat* Committee which sent the lists and applied to the Afghan Agent for passports. Meanwhile Hijrat and Khilafat Committee provided the intending emigrants board and lodging. Two hundred volunteers assisted in arrangements. 'It is a remarkable achievement,' says a report, 'that in spite of intense excitement and wildest rumours there has been no disorder or untoward incident in the city. Police deserve great credit for tact and forbearance,' but no credit is conceded to the people. There was great congestion on the road to Khyber Pass. At the outset emigrants came from poorer classes with a sprinkling of intelligentsia, but the movement spread to other classes. Peshawar was seriously affected as it was at the receiving end of a constant

28. *Collected Works of M. Ghandhi*, Vol. XXVIII, Letter No. 49.

stream of emigrants. By 13 August 18,000 emigrants had already left the province chiefly from the Peshawar district. Religious excitement caused by the stream of emigrants began to affect Government servants. One batch of emigrants included one havildar and six sepoys; there were some resignations from the police and other services. Wild rumours were heard alleging occupation by British troops of Mecca and Medina, desecration of the Kaabah, intended billeting of British troops on villages with threatened outage of women. The movement was also encouraged by speculators who exploited the rural land-owning classes, buying up land and crops at fictitiously low prices.

From Sind about one thousand persons emigrated. With one exception prominent men in this party went only as far as Peshawar and then returned. The Government endeavoured to get the leading *pirs* to deprecate emigration. Special trains were prohibited.

From the Punjab some five hundred emigrants left the province but others went away quietly—the Government estimate is two thousand. The Punjab emigrants came chiefly from the cities, owning no land and having nothing to lose by the venture.

The Afghan authorities were showing alarm at the invasion of Muslims from India. They decided to put a stop to the movement. Emigrants found life fairly intolerable in Afghanistan and a number returned disheartened, and discouraged others from going. Up to the middle of August emigrants were well received in Afghanistan but the burden on villages on the Kabul road was growing and entertainment became poor as the time passed and the numbers increased. The British Government was seriously concerned at the close historical connection between *hijrat* and *jehad* and was closely watching the situation in the hope that the movement, left alone, would exhaust itself.

The Amir of Afghanistan issued a *firman* on 13 August announcing absolute postponement of further immigration into Afghanistan. The Afghan Agent in Peshawar went to Jamrud and tried to dissuade intending emigrants from proceeding but was

stoned and had to return. They were allowed, therefore, to proceed. The Secretary of Khilafat Committee, Peshawar, and others procceded to the boundary and did their best to dissuade the emigrants who showed great reluctance, calling emissaries *kafirs*.

On 14 August a vanguard of *Muhajirin* reached the boundary of Afghanistan. The Afghan Commandant with a guard of fifty men told them they could not proceed. Parleying continued for about an hour and a half by which time the main body of emigrants had arrived, and were threatening to break down barriers. Thereupon communication was established with General Nadir Khan by telephone. The emigrants were told they would be admitted if they could pay their own expenses. They were accordingly allowed to pass through.

The *Muhajirin* already in Afghanistan submitted the following representation to the Amir:

> 'As our brethren, the Indian emigrants, are coming to Afghanistan in great numbers through different routes without informing us of their number and without paying any attention to the notices given, and as it is necessary to arrange for accommodation and comforts before the setting in of the winter for about forty thousand men, it is therefore notified that hereafter until completion of arrangements for the emigrants who have already arrived in Afghanistan, other muhajirin should be stopped from entering the Afghan territory and till further orders about the emigration are issued.
>
> 'Because it is necessary to make proper arrangements for those who have already come in, and when arrangements have been completed for those who have already reached, information will be given that so many muhajirin should come. Nobody will be allowed admittance into Afghanistan if he comes against provisions of these rules.'

The following paragraphs were added to the governing emigration rules:

(1) *Muhajirin* should receive passports from Faqir Muhammad Khan, the Afghan Envoy at Peshawar.

(2) The Muhajirin Committee at Peshawar should inform Head Office at Jalalabad through Faqir Muhammad Khan about

the number of men desiring to proceed to Afghanistan. The Head Officer at Jalalabad after making proper arrangements will then inform that so many *Muhajirin* should be sent by such and such route and so many by caravans.

(3) In the first proclamation it was given out that Jabl-us-Siraj was fixed as a centre of the *Muhajirin* who come to Afghanistan and there in the vicinity of Jabl-us-Siraj they would be granted land and accommodation. But as the land surrounding Jabl-us-Siraj is now full of *Muhajirin* there is no room for others, and those who will come hereafter will be granted accommodation in accordance with the regulations towards the Afghan Turkistan.

(4) Those who prefer to serve in the army of their own accord will be sent to any place the Afghan Government like. They will be subjected to the same rules and regulations as are observed by the Afghan people.

(5) The Indian *Muhajirin* on their entering Afghanistan become Afghan subjects and if they have an idea of going out of Afghanistan they are not allowed to do so without a passport or the permission of the Afghan Government and therefore will not be able to go.

The above five paragraphs were submitted by the Muhajirin Committee to the Amir signed by the members of the Indian Emigration Committee.[29]

29. Proceedings of the Home Department, November 1920. Note on Muhajirin Movement, Pro. No. 55, India Office Liberary. The members of the Committee were : Dr Abdul Ghani ; Hakim Muhammad Aslam, Muhajir Hindi; Muhammad Akbar, Muhajir, Yusafzai; Dr Nur Muhammad, M.B., B.S., Sindhi; Muhammad Raza Arbab Peshawari; Ghulam Muhammad Aziz, Khadim-ul-Muhajirin ; Parywarda, M.A., Ph.D., late Editor, *Bharat* ; Philosopher Banaris, Professor of America, Muhammad Iqbal Shedai, B.A. ; Mr Jan Muhammad Junejoo, Barrister-at-Law, Sindi ; Abdul Karim; Muhammad Zakriya Muhajir ; Abdul Ghafar Utmanzai ; Sher Muhammad Khan Ghauri, Sheikh Abdur Rahim of Qassoor ; Sheikh Abdul Haq of Multan; Rahmat Ali Zakriya of Lahore; Muhammad Salah Abbas of Sind; Pir Usman Shah of Kohat; Muhammad Afzal, Senior Cambridge of Qassoor, student, B.A., son of Abdur Rahim of Qassoor; Mir Rahmat Ullah of Lahore; Maulvi Obaidullah, late Editor *Nazart-ul-Ma'arif*, Delhi.

The Amir passed the following order on the petition :

'The notice and the five paragraphs of the Muhajirin Committee were laid before me and were read by me. They are correct. In accordance with the above paragraphs orders may be issued.'

The rules proposed by the *Muhajirin* after the approval of the Amir read as follows :

(1) At Kabul three regiments of the *Muhajirin* will be enlisted in the Regular Army according to their option and will be paid according to the scale of the Afghan army.

(2) The young emigrant Khanzadas will be allowed to enter the Military College and after the completion of their training there they will be appointed in the *Muhajirin* army according to requirements. Of these there will be no distinction and the *Muhajirin* from India both Hindus and Muslims will have equal rights with the Afghans according to their service.

(3) Teachers, doctors and skilled labourers will be appointed in their respective departments according to their wants and requirements in the various departments. Their pay will be equal to that of Afghans.

(4) For proceeding to Anatolia for the purpose of Islam and in the interests of India an inquiry party from the *Muhajirin* may be appointed which may first go and inquire about the route and the place of their service after which permission could be granted to *Muhajirin* to go there for service.

(5) The Muhajirin Committee will make arrangements for the journey of the emigrants up to Katghan and will limit their number. The Committee will also recommend for assistance to poor and indigent and those pedestrians who cannot afford to travel on reasonable grounds. The Afghan Government sanctions expenses up to Rs 30,000—Kabuli—for all *Muhajirin* of this class.

(6) For the New Colony of *Muhajirin* the Afghan Government provide wood, iron and clothing and for the supply of these things orders are being issued to the Chief Hakim of that place.

(7) As to grain for *Muhajirin* it will be given to them according

to the regulations until the harvest of the *Muhajirin* is ready, but this grain will be issued after the date of the arrival of the *Muhajirin* to their Colony.

(8) Under the arrangements and the supervision of the Afghan Hakim the Indian *Muhajirin* will be allowed to carry on through the Muhajirin Committee their internal business like trade, industry and education.

(9) The Military Training to *Muhajirin* will be given in their respective colonies through Afghan officers and instructors. But the *Muhajirin* who undergo this Military Training will not get any pay and will be considered as volunteers.

(10) In Eastern and Southern Afghanistan there is no Government land and therefore Katghan, which has a good land and healthy climate, will be given for the colony of the *Muhajirin*.

(11) Two Committees are allowed to be formed of the *Muhajirin*, one to be at Kabul and the other in the Colony—and petitions of the *Muhajirin* will be forwarded to the Amir through these Committees.

(12) The President of the Committee in Kabul will be late Ishak Aqasi-i-Kharjia with Ghulam Saddiq Khan, late Assistant to the Afghan Envoy, as Vice-President and Abdul Jabbar Khan, as Secretary of *Muhajirin* and Aman Ullah Khan, Supervisor of the *Muhajirin*.[30]

The movement ultimately died out. It was a case of complete frustration and utter disillusionment, a sad commentary on the lack of leadership which allowed a situation to drift until it got out of hand. Zafar Ali Khan, speaking on 14 August 1920, the date when the emigrants were facing great hardships, said: It was time for the advent of the Mahdi. . . . He referred to the dropping of bombs in Mecca and the outraging of virgin Turkish girls; the Turkish treaty was a scrap of paper; they should now perform *hijrat* . . . if they failed in non-cooperation they were all *kafirs* themselves. He said further the face of an Indian soldier killed at

30. Proceedings of the Home Dept., Nov. 1920, Pro No. 54. Note on Muhajirin Movement.

Baghdad had been turned into that of a pig, and they should never join the army.[31]

Zafar Ali Khan was sentenced to five years transportation. Mohamed Ali was pleading the cause of Khilafat in Europe at this time. One wonders whether he would have approved the tone and temper of the propaganda which led to the fiasco that was the *hijrat* movement.

The year 1920 ended with the Nagpur Session of the Indian National Congress which reaffirmed the resolution of non-co-operation and adopted *Swaraj*, not necessarily within the British Empire as the aim of the Congress. Gandhi was in complete and uncontested control of the organisation. 'Tilak disapproved of both the Khilafat agitation and the non-cooperation programme, and with his dying breath said : "We want majorities not Mahatmas!" C.R. Das stood four square against non-cooperation. "There is not a single argument," he said, "advanced against my proposition of any value except only one, namely, Mr. Gandhi—Mahatma Gandhi—said this and said that. This is not an argument." Mrs. Besant refused to reject the Reforms altogether and Mr. Jinnah opposed Gandhi's programme. Pt. Malaviya preferred to be called a "political juggler" rather than non-co-operate. Such were the personalities arraigned against Gandhi but for a packed session non-cooperation had little hope of success. Special Khilafat trains brought faithful adherents of Shaukat Ali, and Marwaris, personal adherents of Gandhi. In order to retain Muslim support, Gandhi persisted in supporting non-cooperation and in order to make the resolution more acceptable introduced the word "gradual," and left the word "Swaraj" undefined. Only 1826 voted in favour and 800 against, while 3188 delegates remained neutral. This was a clear indication that the majority of Congressmen were against non-cooperation, and the movement was forced on an unwilling country.'[32]

At Nagpur Mr Jinnah opposed the creed of the Congress. He

31. *Punjab History of Non-co-operation*, quoted in D.I.B., p. 161.

32. Azim Hussain, *Fazal-i-Hussain, A Political Biography*, p. 124.

asked why a change in the nation's political outlook was necessary. Mohamed Ali was tempted to repeat a story he had heard in England:

'A salvation army preacher was once preaching in Piccadilly in the neighbourhood of midnight and asking the people to follow him on the road to salvation. A seasoned club-man, who had dined only too well and was far from unfamiliar with the ways of Piccadilly, stopped on his way home from his club when he heard such a novel sermon from a prominent pulpit in Piccadilly. He raised his eyes, surveyed the whole group of preacher and congregation, and with the smile of the polite and the curious asked the man who wanted all to follow him on the road to salvation. "Beg pardon, but might I ask whether you have yourself trod on this road to salvation?" The salvation army preacher zealously replied: "Yes, Sir, I have trod that path for full fifteen years!" On this the club-man of Piccadilly said, "Ah! is that so? Well, if after full fifteen years' treading the road to salvation has brought you at this hour to Piccadilly, if I were you I would try another road!" '[33]

At this session Jinnah raised a hornets' nest by mistering Gandhi and Mohamed Ali. 'Call him Mahatma,' the crowd demanded when Jinnah spoke of Mr Gandhi. 'Call him Maulana,' shouted the infuriated audience when he referred to Mr Mohamed Ali. 'I refuse to be dictated by you,' Jinnah retorted. 'I am entitled to use my discretion to call a man by whatever designation I choose, provided it is parliamentary. I do not recognize Mr. Mohamed Ali's claim to be Maulana.'[34]

It is said that Mohamed Ali's Big Brother, Shaukat Ali, rushed to the stage with a stick but the cult of non-violence came in his way!

The All-India Muslim League also held its session at Nagpur on the same dates as the Congress. The League expressed its appreciation of the work of the Khilafat Delegation in Europe under the 'intrepid and able leadership of Maulana Mohamed Ali, than whom a more courageous, outspoken and withal moderate and correct interpreter of the Muslim obligations and Indian sentiments could not be found.'[35]

33. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 381.
34. A. A. Ravoof, *Meet Mr. Jinnah* (1955), p. 235.
35. *Muslim League Documents*, p. 554.

Chapter Nine

NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION

[1921]

Non-violence Adopted as a Policy—Little Difference between the Platforms of the Congress and Khilafat—Preparation for a National Struggle—The Afghan Bogey and the Hindu Fears—Khilafat Delegation to Afghanistan Disallowed—Lord Reading's Efforts at Creating a Split between Gandhi and Mohamed Ali—Proposed Arrest of Mohamed Ali—Sir Muhammad Shafi's Assessment of the Muslim Temper—Dr Ansari Leads Second Khilafat Delegation to England—Gandhi-Reading Talks—Gandhi's Promise to Secure Statement from Mohamed Ali regretting Violence in His Speeches—Gandhi's Draft Statement and Mohamed Ali's Amendment—Publication of Statement and Government Communique—Adverse Comment of Motilal Nehru on Mohamed Ali's Apology and Gandhi's Defence—Lord Reading Scores a Diplomatic Victory—Mohamed Ali's Version of the Episode—All-India Khilafat Conference at Karachi and the Call not to Enlist in the Army—The Moplah Rebellion—Mohamed Ali Arrested at Waltair—Trial at Karachi and the Speech to the Jury—Rigorous Imprisonment Converted into Simple One at Montagu's Initiative—Public Reaction to the Arrest

FOR the better part of the year 1920 Mohamed Ali pleaded passionately the cause of Khilafat in Europe. From every platform he had proclaimed that his was a religious mission; to him Khilafat was a matter of faith and the Khalifah, the centre of the structure of Islam which would fall apart like a house of cards if the pivot were once removed. Islam and Khilafat were synonymous; and the identity to him was so complete and pervasive that he could not reconcile his own existence as a Muslim, in a world deprived of both the person and the institution of Khilafat, for how could a body survive without a heart? With singular clarity and conviction he had hammered on this simple theme in the knowledge

and belief that his views were shared by the mass of Muslims at home.

Now in India for a whole year he espoused not only Khilafat but a variety of causes which he thought were consistent and connected with the central theme of Khilafat. Non-violent non-co-operation was a slogan Muslim India had heard for the first time. With it went the spinning wheel and the home-spun *khaddar* —symbols whose significance was not easy to understand for the simple reason that they were so new. With Khilafat was mixed the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and the attendant growth of a composite nation sharing and pursuing a common goal and marching together towards a common objective. Even the word selected for the objective was unfamiliar. Tilak had raised the slogan 'Swaraj is my birthright,' and Gandhi had picked up the word, and made the attainment of 'Swaraj' within a year, the immediate objective of the joint movement of the Congress and Khilafat. It meant different things to different people. The mass of Muslims and the majority of Maulvis, who had now jumped on the hand-wagon of Khilafat, understood little of the new philosophy of non-co-operation and less of non-violence. All that mattered was the plight of Turkey and the declining fortune of the Khalifah who was by now a virtual prisoner in the hands of the conquering powers.

Mohamed Ali was no convert to non-violence, nor were the Muslims. And yet he was the chief lieutenant of Gandhi and was leading millions of men into a battle whose rules were certainly strange and unfamiliar. Explaining his compact with the Congress, Mohamed Ali said: ' . . . I have willingly entered into this compact because I think we can achieve victory without violence; . . . Swaraj must be won by the minimum sacrifice of the maximum number, and not by the maximum sacrifice of the minimum number.'[1] Here he was echoing Gandhi's thoughts but these were his own:

1. *Writings and Speeches*, pp. 278-79.

' "There is no compulsion in faith," says the Quran, because force and religious conviction have no common denominator. They belong to two very different planes. But when war is forced on a Muslim, and the party that does so has no other argument but this, then, as a Muslim and the follower of the Last of the Prophets, I may not shrink, but must give the enemy battle on his own ground and beat him with his own weapons. If he respects no other argument than force and would use it against me, I would defend my Faith against his onslaught and would use against him all the force I could command,—force without stint and without cessation. But when, in the language of the Quran, "War hath dropped her weapons," my sword must also be sheathed. Warfare, according to the Quran, is an evil; but persecution is a worse evil, and may be put down with the weapons of war. When persecution ceases, and every man is free to act with the sole motive of securing divine goodwill, warfare must cease. These are the limits of Violence in Islam, as I understand it, and I cannot go beyond these limits without infringing the Law of God.'[2]

Mohamed Ali threw all the vehemence of an impulsive and impetuous nature into the fight, sweeping away the inner contradictions for he was now riding on the crest of a wave. This was his year of destiny; by his feverish activity he had caused an upheaval, a stir and a storm the like of which India had not seen before. With Gandhi and his brother he was constantly on the move touring all over India. There was hardly a place where he stayed for a whole week during this period. The people were being prepared for the struggle.

There was an intellectual ferment in the country but courage was yet to be matched by knowledge and patriotism with experience. A campaign was launched with boundless enthusiasm untutored by any first-hand experience of the conditions of national growth and progress. Mohamed Ali spoke with a ring of sincerity and earnestness, but in the long and fiery speeches of this period one sees him attacking many a theme, which he believed were directly relevant to the main objective he had set about to achieve. He called on parents and guardians to withdraw their children from Government-aided schools; he called on trustees, managers

2. Ibid.

and teachers of Government schools to help nationalise them; he called on lawyers to suspend practice; he called on merchants to boycott foreign trade; he called on the aristocracy to give up their titles; he called on the bureaucracy not to help their masters; he asked Muslims to give up eating beef; he asked Hindus to refrain from obtaining cow-protection through legislation; he donned *Khaddar* and asked others to join him in spinning it; he asked those who stood for working constitutional reforms to quit the Councils; he asked for funds and he asked for volunteers and, above all, he asked for justice for Turkey. The platform of Khilafat had become almost indistinguishable from the platform of the Congress.

Mohamed Ali attracted large crowds wherever he went. The glamour of Gandhi was pressed into service. C.R. Das gave up his practice as the leading lawyer of Calcutta in January—Mohamed Ali had a hand in this decision—and this provided a further impetus to the movement. The agitation was indeed vigorous. The rural masses, instead of being ruined in litigation, now disposed of their cases without going to the British courts, the temperance movement, which was no sacrifice for the mass of the people, hurt the treasury which was denied an important source of revenue—the picketing of liquor shops was peaceful and dignified. There was excitement and uneasiness. Social boycott, repudiated by Gandhi, but indirectly encouraged by Mohamed Ali, came to such a pass that burial facilities were denied to elected Muslim members of local councils who died during this period.[3]

The year began with a proposal to send a Khilafat delegation to Afghanistan to help relieve the misery of emigrants who had left in a hurry and were now showing signs of repenting at leisure. A large number had returned and those that remained behind needed the counsel and the comfort provided by a visit from their leaders. Mohamed Ali was willing to go to Kabul where the Amir had indicated his consent to receive a delegation, but the British

3. C. P. Vol. XIV. V to SS. Telegram No. 79, No. 101.

Government opposed the move and the project fell through.

In February 1921, Lord Reading wrote to the Secretary of State: 'We have now heard that during the last ten days differences have arisen between Shaukat Ali and Mohamed Ali and Gandhi, who has at least begun to realise that the former definitely looks to assistance from Afghanistan for the furtherance of their schemes for the overthrow of the British Raj.' Lord Reading urged the grant of 'reasonable concessions' on the Treaty of Sevres and remarked that it would 'in all probability have a very marked effect in promoting a split between the Extremist Mohamadans and Gandhi. The former would then find themselves isolated and deserted by both their Hindu allies and all moderate and sensible Mohamedans.'[4]

'The difficulties with regard to Thrace are really very great,' wrote back the Secretary of State for India. 'On the one hand it is impossible to contemplate turning the Greeks out of Thrace... on the other hand, it is, I fear, true that the population near Constantinople is overwhelmingly Greek and more predominantly Turkish the further you get away from it. I am still pegging, and I have hopes at least that the Greeks will be refused permission to have guns or fortifications which can threaten Constantinople. . . . ''[5]

In February Mohamed Ali presided over the Khilafat Conference at Lucknow where Gandhi was present. In the course of his speech at Lucknow Mohamed Ali said: 'I declare today that the Indian Army is the army of Mahatama Gandhi; the Indian Police is the police of Mahatama Gandhi; every man is on the side of Gandhi, nay, on the side of religion and country. The aspect of affairs is now quite changed. I see that God hath already issued His Commandments.'[6]

Among the resolutions passed at the Conference was one expressing confidence in the Sultan of Turkey and requesting him

4. Telegram P. No, 195, 19 February 1921.
5. SS to V., Telegram No. 337, 17 March 1921.
6. D.I.B. Report, p. 164.

to acknowledge and encourage Mustafa Kemal Pasha's party. Another resolution thanked the Amir of Kabul for having agreed to receive a deputation of Indian Muslims and condemned the refusal of the Government to permit the deputation to proceed. Similar resolutions were passed on 21 February at a meeting in Karachi of the Khilafat Committee of Sind. Expression of confidence in the work of Kemal Pasha and allegiance to the Sultan of Turkey, the Khilafat of Islam was a new development which had taken place after Mohamed Ali's return from Europe. It indicated a belated understanding of the role of Mustafa Kemal without, however, a corresponding appreciation of the secular character of the movement in Turkey.

On 12 February Gandhi, accompanied by Ali Brothers and others, performed the opening ceremony of Hakim Ajmal Khan's Tibbia College which had an average attendance of one hundred medical students. Portraits of Lord and Lady Hardinge were unveiled. This, Gandhi stated, showed that non-co-operation was not anti-British and that good deeds done by anyone, English or Indian, were treasured in memory.[7]

In March a number of Khilafat Conferences were held in the United Provinces and Bengal. A new factor was emerging. Abul Kalam Azad in most of his speeches was linking the complete independence of India with the integrity of the Islamic *Shariah*. He was openly declaring that enlistment in the army was contrary to the dictates of *Shariah*. Mohamed Ali scared his Hindu friends, when, in a speech at Madras in March 1921, he stated that he would assist an army invading India from Afghanistan, provided that the invader came to free the country and withdraw after accomplishing his task. The speech caused a flutter, the Afghan bogey was raised once again, and Gandhi had to allay the Hindu fears and suspicions in an article in *Young India* in which he wrote:

7. C.P. Weekly Report from V to SS, Telegram PRO No. 198, 21 February 1921. No. 228 of Vol. XIV.

'I would, in a sense, certainly assist the Amir of Afghanistan if he waged war against the British Government. . . . I warn the reader against believing in the bogey of an Afghan invasion. . . . A weak, disarmed, helpless, credulous India does not know how this Government has kept her under its hypnotic spell. . . . I, therefore, do certainly hope that the Amir will not enter into any treaty with this Government. Any such treaty can only mean unholy bargain against Islam and India.'[8]

Lord Reading, a former Ambassador at Washington, was now to try his diplomatic skill at creating a cleavage between Gandhi and Mohamed Ali and at isolating the Khilafat movement which was now beginning to have a popular base. The Viceroy sent a cable to the Secretary of State on 16 March. 'It is impossible,' he wired, 'for us to conceal our profound disappointment from standpoint of India over proposed modifications in Sevres Treaty. Substantial though these modifications no doubt are, they do not cover the points by which alone Moslem India will be satisfied i.e. restoration of Smyrna, restoration of Ottoman Thrace, and suzerainty of Sultan over Holy Places in Hedjaz. . . . Of the last two there is no mention at all.' Bitter resentment, he warned, would be aroused and the failure of British Government to fulfil the pledges made would increase anti-British excitement which was already overtaking Muslim India.[9]

In April, Khilafat tours and conferences continued unabated. The theme was the same but in addition to Turkey the leaders now kept a constant eye on the need to honour the compact with the Hindu community: 'Mohamed Ali and the family had given up eating beef,' Gandhi had proudly announced; 'it is not even admitted in their kitchen, for they know and do their duty by a neighbour.'[10]

Cow-killing was now a new theme in Mohamed Ali's speeches. At Moradabad (10/11 April) he referred to the maintenance

8. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XX, No. 30.

9. V to SS. Telegram P. No. 377—dated 16 March 1921—Despatched from Foreign and Political Department.

10. *Collected Works of M. Gandhi*, XIX, 254.

of white soldiers who could not live without beef, and attributed to their existence in India the responsibility for cow-killing.[11]

Maulana Abdul Bari, his spiritual preceptor, had appealed to Muslims to give up killing cows as a gesture of goodwill to their Hindu neighbours.

On 1 April, Gandhi made an appeal for one crore (10 millions) of workers and one crore of rupees for Tilak Memorial Fund.

In April, Mohamed Ali made a fiery speech to the Volunteers Conference at Erode, near Madras. The Government of Madras was asked what action they proposed to take and what effect the speech had on the Moplahs.[12]

The Madras Government replied:

> 'The Ali Brothers' speeches were very violent, but it is difficult to obtain reliable reports as the speeches were delivered in Urdu . . . which detracts from their direct effect on the public (for the language is not generally understood in Madras). The speeches were even so tremendous that temporary enthusiasm was created and enormous crowds were attracted.'[13]

At the All-India Khilafat Conference held at Meerut, during the same month, the prevailing note was that Khilafat question had to be settled in India itself. Swaraj alone could solve the problem. Indian Muslims should concentrate their energies on winning freedom of India and then the liberation of holy places and maintenance of Khilafat would follow as a natural course.

In April, the United Provinces Government proposed the prosecution of Mohamed Ali in connection with his speeches in the province. In a discussion on the issue in the Viceroy's Executive Council, the Muslim member, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Mian Muhammad Shafi, voiced his conviction that the proposal was entirely inopportune. The subject was so important that he followed up the discussion with a written memorandum to the

11. D.I.B. Report, p. 167.
12. C.P. V to SS. Telegram P. No. 307, 20 April, No. 59.
13. C.P. Eur F 238, Vol. X.

Viceroy.[14]

Some extracts should be of interest as they reveal how the 'respectable' classes of Indian Muslims saw the life and work of Mohamed Ali. Says Shafi:

'I wish, at the outset, to make it absolutely clear that, personally, I feel no consideration whatsoever for Messrs. Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali. . . . I have always been opposed to the policy which these two brothers have followed for the last eight or nine years. Indeed, by reason of the fact that I have strenuously and consistently exercised my influence among the Indian Musalmans in order to counteract the movement of which the two brothers were the leading champions, it is well known that they never spared any opportunity of attacking me when I was in public life. The columns of the *Comrade* and of the *Hamdard* [the two newspapers of which Mohamed Ali was the editor] bear conclusive testimony of the consistently hostile attitude which the two brothers adopted towards me in the days when I played a humble part in the Muslim educational and political movements in this country. Indeed, even during the period of their internment, they and the party, of which they were prominent members, tried their utmost to prevent my election as President of the All-India Mohamedan Educational Conference in 1916, an attempt in which fortunately they failed ignomiously. But in the consideration of political problems which Government may have to face, I have never allowed my personal sympathy or antipathy to influence my judgment. And, in consequence, my opinion in this particular case is guided exclusively by what I conscientiously consider to be the real interests of the Government of which I am a member.

'At the time when the Ali brothers were released from internment, the problem of the Turkish Peace Terms was creating widespread stir among the Indian Musalmans. Having deep-rooted grudge against the British Government, the Ali brothers saw their opportunity and were not slow to grasp it. They at once assumed the lead in the Khilafat agitation and have been mainly instrumental in bringing the religious leaders into it in order to be able to influence the uneducated and half-educated sections of the Indian Muslim community in the manner well known to us all. They have undoubtedly been carrying on a propaganda, the mischievous gravity of which it is impossible to exaggerate. They have repudiated allegiance to the King-Emperor and have not scrupled to incite the uneducated masses to violence. As I said at the meeting of Council on Thursday last, sooner or later Govern-

14. R.P. No. 56, dated 30 April 1921.

ment will have to take action against them, unless, I may add, they stop their mischievous propaganda and give guarantees of good behaviour in the future. Personally, I am doubtful if that is within the range of probability, But the question for us to decide is whether the present is an opportune moment for taking the action which the United Provinces Government have proposed against these revolutionaries. The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that the psychological moment for such action is not yet.

'It is undeniable that at this moment these two men have, as a result of their systematic play on the milky credulity of our uneducated masses, acquired considerable influence among a section of the people. Their close association with Mr. Gandhi, whose influence among the masses of the Indian people is undeniable, has given added lustre to these imitation diamonds in the eyes of people incapable of judging for themselves. Their arrest and prosecution is bound to create widespread stir in the country. And should the existing intimacy between them and Gandhi continue, the latter is bound to step into the breach, in which case it would be impossible for the Government to remain quiescent. Similar action will have to be taken against him and a repetition of what occurred in April 1919 is bound to follow, perhaps, even on a larger scale. The incident which has recently occurred in Malegaon on the arrest of a few unimportant Khilafat workers ought to be an object lesson to us in this connection. It indicates clearly to my mind probability of disturbances taking place in various parts of the country on the arrest of the Ali brothers followed by action against Mr Gandhi. Disturbances only in a few places in this country led to an Afghan War in 1919. The situation in Kabul now is far more unsatisfactory than it was in the spring of that year. With the presence of strong anti-British influences in Afghanistan and in view of the tribal aggression at present proceeding on the Frontier, there is at least a likelihood, if not certainty, of internal disturbances being followed by foreign invasion. Given peace on the Frontier, I am entirely prepared to face any internal situation that may arise in the country, for I believe that we are strong enough to meet it. On the other hand, given internal peace, I would have no hesitation to face an Afghan invasion, for I feel sure that we can deal with such an eventuality with certainty of success. But can we afford to face widespread internal disturbances coupled with an Afghan invasion? That is the problem with which we have to deal.

'Let us wait until the Allied Governments have come to their revised decision regarding the Turkish Peace Terms and the Kabul negotiations have been concluded. Meanwhile, there is already, visible in the distance, a glimmering of the dawn of sanity in India.

The first session of the Reformed Councils has produced a certain amount of good effect. The Ali brothers' own pronouncement regarding what they will do in the event of an Afghan invasion is producing a reaction in sober circles against them. His Excellency's pronouncement since his arrival in India, his visits to Lahore and Amritsar, the announcement that His Excellency has called for the records of the cases of the Martial Law prisoners who are still in jail, have produced salutary effect. The deliberation of the Repressive Laws and Press Committees, the meetings of which will be held in the month of May, are bound to produce further affect. Time is, to my mind, soon arriving when what may be called the Right Wing of the Extremist Section will not only pause in the activities which that party has hitherto been carrying on, but will altogether dissociate itself from the Extremist propaganda. That will be the psychological moment to strike if action may still be necessary. During the last three weeks or so, even the Ali brothers have somewhat slackened in their activities. Is there any immediate and urgent necessity of disturbing this hornets' nest, involving, as such action does, at least the possibility of the serious consequences which I have mentioned above? I venture to think that this is an inopportune moment for such action. In my anxious watchfulness of British interests to which I am whole-heartedly devoted, I have thought it my duty to place the conclusion, arrived at by me after anxious and careful consideration, before His Excellency; and I commend this note to His Excellency's careful consideration.'[15]

In May the Second Khilafat Deputation, which had gone to England in February at the invitation of the British Government, returned home. It comprised Seth Chotani, Hasan Imam, Dr Ansari and Qazi Abdul Ghaffar. In his diary, the Secretary of the Deputation, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, recorded some vivid impressions of a few important figures in British public life.

Montagu struck him as a very magnetic and dexterous politician, an incurable optimist with an unfailing smile on his lips. He described him as an engaging conversationalist, who had a knack of reaching other people's hearts with profuse and effortless expressions of sympathy. But his elegant manner was just a mask. His geniality could not deceive those who received it. His courtesy was the courtesy of a well-bred pauper whose 'good temper is the

15. Ibid.

indication of an empty pocket'.

The diarist describes the seventy-year-old Prime Minister, Lloyd George, 'as stout and pink in the face with unusually bright and piercing eyes. His upper lip was concealed under a thick moustache and his hair was combed backwards in the familiar Indian style. He found him evasive, cryptic and laconic in speech and as uncertain in manner as the London weather. He complained that he only talked about things that he wanted to talk about, only keeping up an appearance of discussion. He referred often to notes and was rescued by the Secretary where he failed or faltered. Though at times flashy and brilliant, he looked like a man with a bad liver. The two interviews with the Prime Minister were so meaningless that the members of the Delegation doubted the utility of a long voyage from India to Britain.'[16]

Dr Ansari, leader of the Delegation, gave an account of the work to a Session of the Muslim League over which he presided. He referred to the obdurate statesmen of Europe who would not yield an inch. He attributed the conduct of Great Britain to a notion of superiority of West over East and said that the question was, therefore, not only one of India's honour but the struggle for emancipation of enslaved Asiatics from the thraldom of the West. He, therefore, advocated non-co-operation as laid down by Gandhi justifying it as a divine injunction imposed in Muslim *Shariah*.[17]

In the Viceroy's Council of 27 March a decision was taken to prosecute all persons guilty of seditious speeches with the exception of Gandhi. 'We have reasons to hope,' said the Secret report, 'that Mahomedans would be detached from the Khilafat movement and would return to the side of Government if their opinion could be met in the matter of Thrace.' At this moment, the report indicated, Government was considering the question of prosecuting the Ali Brothers for violent speeches made in the

16. Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, *Naqsh-i-Farang* (Lahore: Darul Isha'at, 1923), quoted by Abdul Hamid, *Muslim Separatism in India*, p. 153.
17. C.P. Weekly Tele. from V to SS, Vol. XIV, No. 8.

United Provinces.'[18]

An opportunity presented itself to Lord Reading early in May. Pandit Malaviya came to see the Viceroy who, among other things, informed him of the Government's decision to commence criminal proceedings against the Ali Brothers for having made speeches inciting to violence, and the discussion turned upon the disturbances that might possibly ensue. Malaviya was in the good books of Government. He had opposed the programme of non-co-operation. His advice was, therefore, considered of some value. Malaviya suggested that it would be of advantage for the Viceroy to meet Gandhi. Lord Reading agreed. In due course Gandhi went to Simla at the request of Pandit Malaviya. At the first interview the Viceroy made no mention of the proposed prosecutions. Upon the next occasion, on 14 May, Lord Reading brought up the subject stating that, contrary to the doctrine advocated by Gandhi, some responsible non-co-operators had made violent speeches, and Gandhi immediately repudiated incitement to violence and said that if he was satisfied that any of his lieutenants had incited to violence, he would publicly repudiate them unless they withdrew their statements. Having got this general commitment of principle from Gandhi, Reading mentioned the names of Shaukat Ali and Mohamed Ali. When passages from their speeches were read out to Gandhi he admitted that they were capable of bearing the interpretation placed upon them by the Viceroy. Gandhi asserted that he was convinced that they were not intended but he added he would see the Brothers and advise them to express publicly their regret for the unintentional incitement in the passages. The Viceroy thereupon asked whether in view of the importance of the document Gandhi would show him the draft of the statement he intended to advise the Brothers to publish. Lord Reading said that if Gandhi showed him the statement, and if it satisfied him, he would prevent the institution of prosecutions which the Government proposed to undertake.

18. Eur E 238, Vol. X. V to SS. Tele. P. No. 339 dated 30 April 1921.

Gandhi readily agreed to show the statement to the Viceroy. The draft statement prepared by Gandhi was as follows:

'Friends have drawn our attention to certain speeches of ours which in their opinion have a tendency to incite to violence. We desire to state that we never intended to incite to violence, but recognize that certain passages in our speeches are capabler of bearing the interpretation put upon them. We, therefore, since ely feel sorry and express our regret for the unnecessary heat of some of the passages in these speeches, and we give our public assurance and promise to all who may require it so long as we are associated with the movement of non-cooperation, we shall not directly or indirectly advocate violence at present or in the future nor create an atmosphere of preparedness for violence. Indeed, we hold it contrary to the spirit of non-violent non-cooperation to which we have pledged our word.'[19]

The Viceroy after reading the draft observed that the introduction of certain paragraphs gave the statement the appearance of a manifesto. The statement, moreover, did not contain a promise to refrain in the future from speeches inciting to violence. Gandhi agreed to delete the paragraphs in question to add a passage to cover the promises of future conduct. Gandhi then left Simla and some days afterwards telegraphed to the Viceroy that the Ali Brothers had signed the statement with immaterial alterations and sent it to the press for publication. The alteration was as follows.

The passage in Gandhi's draft statement was:

'We desire to state that we never intended to incite to violence, but we recognize that certain passages in our speeches are capable of bearing the interpretation put upon them.'

The passage drafted by Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali read:

'We desire to state that we never intended to incite to violence and we never imagined that any passages in our speeches were capable of bearing the interpretation put on them, but we recognize the force of our friends' argument and interpretation.'

After the publication of the statement an official communique was issued by the Government. The terms of the communique

19. *Collected Works of M. Gandhi*, XX, 93-94.

were not settled with Gandhi or the Ali Brothers who never saw it before publication.

The communique which was issued on 13 May by the India Office was as follows:

'The attention of the public has doubtless been drawn to the apology and undertaking issued to-day by Messrs. Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali to the press. This document runs as follows: "Friends have drawn our attention to certain speeches of ours which in their opinion have a tendency to incite to violence. We desire to state that we never intended to incite to violence and we never imagined that any passages in our speeches were capable of bearing the interpretation put upon them, but we recognize the force of our friends' argument and interpretation. We sincerely feel sorry and express our regret for the unnecessary heat of some of the passages in these speeches, and we give our public assurance and promise, to all who may require it, that so long as we are associated with the movement of non-cooperation we shall not directly or indirectly advocate violence at present or in the future, nor create an atmosphere of preparedness for violence. Indeed, we hold it contrary to the spirit of non-violent non-co-operation to which we have pledged our word." In view of the publication of these expressions of regret and promises for the future, the Government of India desire to make it known generally that they had decided on the 6th May to prosecute Messrs. Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali for certain speeches delivered in the United Provinces during the last few months. These speeches in the opinion of the Government of India were direct incitements to violence. The immediate object of the Government in determining to enforce the law on the present occasion was to prevent incitements to violence and to preserve order. After the decision to which reference was made was reached, it was urged upon the Government, that their immediate object could be attained without recourse to the Criminal Courts. The Government consequently suspended further action, and in view of the statements now issued over the signature of Messrs. Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali, have decided to refrain from instituting criminal proceedings against them in respect of these speeches, so long as the solemn public undertaking contained in the statement issued to the press is observed. Should the conditions of this undertaking not be performed, the Government of India will be at liberty to prosecute for these past speeches. It must not be inferred from the original determination of the Government to prosecute for speeches inciting to violence that promoting disaffection of a less violent character is not an offence against the law. The Government of

India desire to make it plain, that they will enforce the law relating to offences against the State as and when they may think fit against any persons who have committed breaches of it.'

The statement was called 'an apology and an undertaking'. The idea was to create an impression that eminent public leaders had come down on their bended knees in order to escape arrest and imprisonment. Nothing could have been more damaging to a public man's reputation than such a sinister insinuation. The statement gave rise to adverse criticism and whispers, encouraged and fanned by their enemies, who sought to expose the Ali Brothers to the worst possible light in this sorry episode. Gandhi, the author of the statement, came to their rescue. On 1 June he wrote in *Young India*: 'The Ali Brothers carry a big burden on their shoulders. The prestige of Islam, in so far as they are responsible for it, will be measured by the credit they acquire for the most scrupulous regard for truth and honesty in their dealings, and humility and courage of the highest order in their bearing.... They are said to be making me their easy tool. Time, I am sure, will disprove all these charges.'[20] And Gandhi was right for the boot clearly was on the other leg.

Pandit Motilal Nehru took serious exception to Mohamed Ali's action and wrote a long letter to Gandhi whom he accused of securing the suspension of the prosecution by inducing the Brothers to give a public apology and an undertaking. Nehru referred to the case of one Hamid Ahmad who had recently been sentenced at Allahabad to transportation for life and forfeiture of property. 'Is there any reason,' he asked, 'why this man should not be saved?' He wrote, 'I find Maulana Mohamed Ali pays him a high tribute in his Bombay speech of the 30th May. What consolation this tribute will bring to Hamid Ahmad from a man similarly situated who has saved himself by an apology and an undertaking?' There were so many others rotting in jail who had committed no offence. 'Is it enough for us to send them our good

20. Ibid., XX, 160.

wishes from the safe positions we ourselves enjoy? Nehru concluded, 'I think the time has come when the leaders should welcome the opportunity to suffer, and stoutly decline all offers of escape. It is in this view of the case that I have taken exception to the action of the Ali Brothers. Personally, I love them.'

Gandhi explained that the apology of the Brothers was not made to the Government. It was addressed and tendered to friends, who drew their attention to their speeches. It was certainly not given at the bidding of the Viceroy. 'I betray no confidence,' he wrote, 'when I say that it was not even suggested by him.'[21]

The storm blew over but not without leaving a scar behind. Lord Reading had clearly scored a success and he was warmly congratulated by the Secretary of State :

'I need only say at this stage that the whole series of your telegrams make a piece of history which is likely to be fruitful in the statesmanship of India. . . . We are all delighted with your skilful treatment of Gandhi. You gained a great victory. Many people have expressed to me their belief that the recantation of Ali Brothers must detract from their political force. I can only believe they made the recantation because Gandhi insisted. If they had not there would have been a breach between them and Gandhi. They avoided it by their recantation but it must have left very unpleasant thoughts in their mind which are all to the good.'[22]

The Viceroy, who believed that he had outwitted and outmanoeuvred Gandhi, gleefully wrote to his son :

'If trouble comes between (Mohamed Ali) and Gandhi, it means the collapse of the bridge over the gulf between Hindu and Muslim.'[23]

The Government of India's weekly telegram on the political situation to the India Office for this period gave the following reactions to the statement of Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali :

21. Ibid., XX, 218-19.

22. MSS Eur E 264/12 dated 1 June 1921, Letter from Montagu to Reading.

23. B.R. Nanda, *The Nehrus*, p. 193.

'Ali Brothers' statement and communique issued by the Government of India on it well received in press and Viceroy's conduct of negotiations greatly appreciated. . . . There is no doubt that the Ali Brothers' apology has reduced their influence and was a great set-back to certain sections of the non-cooperation party.... We have suggested that local governments should consider advisability of extending to other and less prominent offenders than Ali Brothers the same concession that was given to them on the same conditions. . . .

'Apology of Ali Brothers still main topic of discussion. Opinions vary, some depicting apology as instance of their heroic spirit, others as unfortunate defeat. In some quarters regarded as diplomatic victory by Viceroy over simple-minded patriots; in others characterised as undignified retreat. General impression of man in street that Ali Brothers have done something astute and thereby escaped a lengthy incarceration. Apology not regarded as serious. More sophisticated regard episode as an achievement, but not as a real victory.'

On 22 December 1921, Montagu sent Lord Reading a copy of two letters written by Mohamed Ali to one Dr Abdul Hamid Said in Rome giving interesting particulars of his activities in India.

The first letter was written sometime in May. The exact date is not known as the first two pages were not available, but the second letter is dated Bombay, 23 July, and contains an interesting reference to Mohamed Ali's 'apology'. Montagu impressed upon Reading 'the imperative necessity for secrecy,' in dealing with these letters for the disclosure would mean that 'my agent would inevitably be exposed and his life would be jeopardised.'[24]

Now that there is no such fear let us see what Mohamed Ali had to tell his friend in Rome about this sorry episode. It is a lengthy explanation, but Mohamed Ali deserves a hearing after the other versions have been read :

'When the Congress was adopting for the first time the Khilafat programme of non-violent non-cooperation, the essential thing was unity of Hindus and Musulmans and even if Musulmans had been ready for violence, which they were not, they couldn't

24. R.P., No. 28.

have succeeded without Hindu good-will. Hitherto the English had ruled over us by playing Hindu against Musulman, and Musulman against Hindu. This was their chief strength and our chief weakness. So long before we were free we had made up our minds to bring about a complete entente between Hindus and Moslems, even if the Moslems had to suffer many discomforts in the process, and the best man among the Hindus to deal with was Mahatama Gandhi, a peace-loving and non-violent patriot who was intensely religious without a fury of a theologian and whose honesty all could rely upon. He found us to be equally religious and equally without the fury of the theologain, and as Moslems we could not pledge ourselves to remain non-violent in all circumstances, he found that we too regarded force at present to be futile, and above all he could trust our word as much as we trusted his. Even if we ourselves wished to use force immediately which we did not and could not, we would have lost his support and therefore the one chance of bringing about the Hindu-Moslem entente and thus have lost the chance of bringing the Government to its senses. This I have already explained to you. But now despairing of making us quarrel among ourselves, the Government took to frightening the Hindu with the bogey of an invasion of India by Afghanistan and the re-establishment of an Islamic Empire in India, chiefly it wanted a big military budget to be passed by the Legislative Assembly composed of timid sycophants, mostly anti-Moslems. With this end in view it made insinuations about me as I said we wanted Afghans to invade India. With Gandhi's entire approval I made a speech at Madras in which I restated for the third time in present year the Islamic doctrine that if the Afghans wantonly attacked the people of India in order to subjugate them, we shall oppose them for Islam did not permit such aggression, chiefly against the Moslems themselves, but if the Afghans waged *Jihad* against the British Government which held the Khalifa as prisoner, which aimed at the destruction of Khilafat and of the temporal power of Islam and which still occupied and intended to dominate the Jezirat-ul-Arab, it would be *haram* for us to fight the Afghans and if *Jihad* approached us, we should be bound to assist the Mujahedin in all possible ways, including the use of force. This had already been published by us in 1917 and again communicated to the Government in 1919 from our prison. But the Government and its supporters used even this to create suspicion in the Hindu minds. It did not succeed with all, but it was on the point of succeeding with some, when Mahatama Gandhi met Lord Reading, the new Viceroy, at Simla and also one or two other very timid Hindu leaders. In order to allay the unwarranted suspicion of such Hindus, we accepted Gandhi's advice that for some passages in certain other speeches

of ours into which unnecessary heat had been imported and which, in his opinion as well as theirs, could bear the interpretation—though never intended by us—that we were preparing the people for the use of force under cover of a peaceful movement, we should publicly express our regrets and give reassurances to all who needed it in their timidity that our present policy, though not our creed, was opposed to the use of force. This he volunteered to advise us of his own accord and it was then that the Viceroy expressed his gladness and informed him that Government had intended to prosecute us, but that he would stop it. When we accepted Gandhi's advice without accepting his interpretation of even unintentional incitement . . . and issued our statement, Lord Reading crowed over the victory of our apology. It was advertised all over India as our surrender and collapse, and from what Abdur Rahman Siddiqui wrote from Karlsbad, I understand the same was done all over Europe and just as well as we all along felt sure they would do. I believe the same must have been done all over the Moslem world. The moment Hayat brought the news of the speech of the Viceroy at Simla to Broach, where I was presiding over a Khilafat Conference I consulted Gandhi and immediately gave Reading such a crushing reply that the whole bubble burst in a minute. But Reuter does not send these things to Europe and I trust you will consult Abdur Rahman who gets Indian newspapers and to whom I have written at length some weeks ago and arrange to make it known that we never apologised to Government, that the information of our intended prosecution was not given to Gandhi before he volunteered the statement that he would advise us to express our regret for the unnecessary heat of some of our speeches, and that we accepted this advice not to avoid prosecution but to allay Hindu suspicions and in particular to prove to Gandi that we have no personal pique and enough humility and respect of our colleague and leader's advice. For some time the Government's plan of discrediting us succeeded, but after my speech (of which I send a cutting) and Gandhi's repeated writings the people were convinced of the pettifogging lawyer's chicanery and are enraged against him.'

This was the storm that was in the middle of the year 1921. By June, Gandhi had collected a crore (10 million) of rupees for the Swaraj Fund and thenceforward he concentrated mainly on cloth-boycott.

In July, Mohamed Ali presided over an All-India Khilafat Conference at Karachi. Many resolutions reaffirming the Khilafat programme were passed and demands about Thrace, Smyrna and

the Holy Places were reiterated. The meeting professed its devout allegiance to the Khalifah, Sultan Wahid-ud-Din and voiced its expectation that the Khalifah would 'fully appreciate and value the meritorious efforts of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his comrades in their noble struggle for the preservation of the Islamic interests.' The most important resolution ran as follows:

'This meeting offers hearty congratulations to Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the Government of Angora on their brilliant victories and heroic efforts for the preservation of the Islamic Empire and prays the Almighty that they may similarly succeed as early as possible in expelling the Allied forces from every corner of the Turkish territories. This meeting further emphatically declares that in the present circumstances the Holy Shariat forbids every Mussalman to serve or enlist himself in the British Army or to raise recruits for it, that it is incumbent on all Muslims in general and all Ulema in particular to carry this religious commandment to every Muslim soldier in the British Indian Army. This meeting further declares that in case the British Government directly or indirectly, secretly or openly, resumes hostilities against the Government of Angora, the Indian Muslims will be compelled in co-operation with the Congress to resort to civil disobedience and at the next session of the Congress at Ahmedabad to declare India's independence and the establishment of an Indian Republic.'[25]

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress passed the following resolution a few days before the Khilafat Conference at Karachi:

'With reference to a question raised as to the propriety of Indians assisting the British Government in the event of its reopening active hostilities against the Turkish Government at Angora, the Working Committee is of opinion that consistently with the non-cooperation resolution adopted at the special session of the Congress at Calcutta it is the duty of every Indian to refrain from helping the British Government in the prosecution of such hostilities in direct defiance of Mussalman opinion and it is therefore the duty of the Indian soldier class to decline to serve in connection therewith.'

An appeal was made to enroll ten million members for the

25. No. 7 from D.I.B. Report, p. 171.

movement and collect four million rupees through the sale of Khilafat receipts for aid to sufferers from Smyrna and *Muhajirin*, etc.

Mohamed Ali made a long speech chiefly connected with the 'apology' to Government, reiterated the old statements and said that they could never apologise to Government. He spoke of the six interviews between the Viceroy and Gandhi and said if the Viceroy did not agree to a joint statement, Gandhi would issue a separate one, and that the people would sooner believe Gandhi than the Viceroy.

In the same month (July) the report of the Khilafat Non-co-operation Committee was released under the signatures of its members, Gandhi, Kitchlew, Shaukat Ali and Ahmed Saddiq Khattri. The report, *inter alia*, stated : 'We consider it to be the duty of all Indian soldiers to refuse to assist the British Government should it require them to fight against the Turks. The Muslim *ulama* should exert themselves to the fullest extent to bring home to the Muslim soldiery the Commandments of Islamic Law.'

Lord Reading, reporting to the Secretary of State on the Karachi Conference, brought out the fact that Gandhi did not attend this Conference. He mentioned that Sir Muhammad Shafi, a member of his Executive Council, had told him that it was the first of these Conferences that Gandhi had not attended. 'Whether he refrained because he was not entirely in sympathy with the course that events would take I cannot says.' Lord Reading, however, was of the view that Gandhi would have less hesitation in repeating the offending language of Karachi than the language inciting to violence of the Ali Brothers that led to the apology.

In August the Moplah Rebellion broke out. The Madras C.I.D. reported that the revolt was the first fruit of the Khilafat agitation. It took several months and many repressive acts to quell the revolt. Though the pleas for *jehad* from the Khilafat platform were usually qualified by appeals for non-violence, the

contradiction in terms was beyond the comprehension of simple Moplahs who used the only form of *jehad* they knew. The following extracts from a speech of one of their leaders throw some light on the contemporary atmosphere of revolt:

'We have extorted Swaraj from the white men and what we have secured we are not going to give up so easily. We shall give Hindus the option of death or Islam. We have the example of the Holy Prophet that it is a good act to kill for God's work. Success of our cause is certain.

'Ali Musaliar of Tirurangadi was told in a dream by Mampratti Thangal that the time for establishing the Khilafat had come. Musaliar also told us that God would show us some signs and portents to indicate the time when we were to begin the great fight for Khilafat. Just before the outbreak did you see anything peculiar in the moon? Did you see in it (*i*) green, (*ii*) red, (*iii*) blue, (*iv*) black and (*v*) white? (The crowd after consultation, "Yes, we all saw, we all saw.") All this shows that God is with you. In all our Muslim States there will be no expensive litigation. We do not want Vakils. For a paper which is worth a quarter anna the Government is taking from us 150 and 200 rupees. This injustice must go. In our new State there shall be no private property. No one should have more than what he actually wants. We do not want the present system of police. We have already organised our police, 16 men per village. They have agreed to serve at the rate of four annas per day. The total expenditure under this head is only Rs. 4 per day. We have destroyed the Taluka offices and looted the treasury for very good reasons. The money in the treasury is our own. We do not want such expensive buildings for the carrying out of our simple everyday routine work. All the costly buildings and expensive machinery of administration which the Sirkar has invented are a delusion and a snare. All this system must go and nothing but complete destruction will answer our purpose. The whole administration and system of punishment require drastic change. Everything is provided in the Quran and nothing but Quranic law shall be tolerated in the new Muslim State we have established. Don't be afraid of defeat. The Englishman has no army. He had only 1,500 soldiers and two bombs. These bombs have been stolen. As for the soldiers he has troubles in Madras, Trichinopoly and Bombay and the whole Islamic world will be up in arms immediately. The white man cannot starve us. We have plenty of paddy just harvested. We shall rush at him (white man) and capture his guns. So do not be dispirited. The Swaraj we have won, we are not going to give up. One thing more. You know it is said in our books that when

Mecca and Medina are held by non-Muslims, it is the time to fight for the Khilafat and after this fight which will bring victory to us there will be no non-Muslim in this world.'[26]

At first the rebellion was directed against the Government. As it spread, it took the form of a peasant uprising against Hindu landlords. This was the bloodiest communal clash of the year: 2339 were killed, 1652 wounded, 5955 captured and 39,348 prisoners were taken of whom 24,167 were convicted of rebellion or lesser crimes.

At about this time the air was thick again with rumours of Mohamed Ali's impending arrest. The Viceroy and his Executive Council had been considering this question for some time. Lord Reading had reported at the end of July that 'Mohamed Ali is trying hard to recover his position and is indulging in fairly wild talk. . . . Our reports indicate that he has become very high-handed and is upsetting some of his own followers in consequence. We are having him carefully watched and, if his speeches are of a violent character, we shall certainly prosecute him.'[27]

The dilemma that the Viceroy was facing was that the logical conclusion of arresting Mohamed Ali would be the need for similar action in regard to Gandhi and this meant courting avoidable trouble at this time. The debate went on in the Executive Council. Two of its members, Ibrahim Rahimtoola and C.H. Setalvad, wrote a dissenting note on 26 August and strongly advised against Mohamed Ali's arrest on the following grounds:

'1. When the Turks were winning against the Greeks in the war which is now going on, the Government of India did not institute any prosecution of the Khilafat leaders. The tide of war has now changed. The Greeks are reported to be successful all round and they have penetrated over sixty miles on a front of 50 miles into the homelands of Turkey. Any prosecution of the Khilafat leaders at this stage of the Turco-Greek hostilities is sure to confirm the prevailing feeling that Britain is out to annihilate

26. D.I.B. Report, pp. 175-76.
27. R.P. Letter dated 28 July 1921, from V. to Montagu.

Islam.

'2. This is not an isolated action to be decided upon on its own merits. It will have a far-reaching effect on the general situation and will necessarily compel Government to take one step after another. Up to now, while Government have prosecuted the smaller people they have consistentlv and of set purpose refrained from prosecuting the leaders. The Ali Brothers in consequence of the apology have suffered in their influence as evidenced by the fact that the Khilafat and Congress organs in the Press have been putting forward all sorts of excuses for their conduct. Every effort is being made to regain popular opinion in their favour. The recent speeches of the two brothers clearly indicate their great anxiety in winning back popular favour even at the risk of walking into jail. Any action of the kind proposed would, in our opinion, have the sure effect of rehabilitating the Ali Brothers in the estimation of their followers by making them martyrs and bringing about a general rally rounda weakening agitation.

'3. If action is taken against the Ali Brothers, it is almost certain that Mr. Gandhi and his leading followers will repeat the offence. It may be mentioned here that at the joint meeting of the Executive Council with the Ministers at which this subject was discussed, all the three Ministers were unanimously of opinion that no action should be taken against the Ali Brothers and the other persons mentioned unless the Government of India were prepared to adopt a uniform policy of prosecuting all leaders who infringe the criminal law without any differentiation or discrimination.

'4. It will be admitted that it essential is that H.R.H. the Prince of Wales should arrive in a calm atmosphere in order to make his visit a success. As shown above, when His Royal Highness arrives in November next, the country will be in the midst of the effects of serious disturbances, pending trials of political leaders for sedition and prosecution of a large number of people for disturbances of the peace. Rather than allow His Royal Highness to come to this country under such deplorable conditions, it may become necessary for the Government of India to urge the abandonment of the visit.

'5. We are not in a position to judge what effect has been produced or is likely to be produced on the Indian Army and the Police by the propaganda which has been carried on during recent months. We do not know whether the propaganda referred to is connected with the Khilafat only or with both the Khilafat and the Congress. If it is propaganda carried on jointly by the leaders of the two movements then the policy which may be decided upon will have to be applied to both the movements.'

Lord Reading had really made up his mind and the counsel of his dissenting colleagues was of little consequence. Even before he raised the matter in the Executive Council he had written to the Secretary of State:

'We have shown the utmost patience with these two, but there are limits and once those limits are transgressed, can political considerations of expediency be weighed any longer? I have not raised the question in my Council, but when I do, I think there will be a majority at any rate to recommend prosecution. But in view of the Prince's visit [Prince of Wales] anything that must be done must be done quickly.'

'It would be inconvenient,' Lord Reading remarked with the traditional sense of British humour, 'for a republic to be proclaimed at Ahmedabad while the Prince was here I think!'[28]

Lord Reading acted with firmness and speed. Mohamed Ali was arrested an 14 September 1921 at the railway station of Waltair, when he was travelling with Gandhi on their way to Madras. Here is the eye-witness account of Gandhi who wrote it the same day for *Young India* in which it appeared on 22 September:[29]

'The much talked of arrest of Maulana Mohamed Ali took place at Waltair, whilst we were on our way to Madras. I am writing this in the train, just after writing out a few telegrams. The train halted at Waltair for over twenty-five minutes. Maulana Mohamed Ali and I were going outside the Station to address a meeting. Hardly had we gone a few paces from the entrance, when I heard the Maulana shouting to me and reading the notice given to him. I was a few paces in front of him. Two white men and half a dozen Indian police composed the party of arrest. The officer in charge would not let the Maulana finish reading the notice, but grasped his arm and took the Maulana away. With a smile on his lips he waved good-bye. I understood the meaning. I was to keep the flag flying.

'I continued my journey to the meeting place. I asked the people to remain calm, and fulfil the Congress programme. I then retraced my steps, and went where the Maulana was being detained. I asked the officer in charge whether I could see the Maulana. He said he had orders to let his wife and secretary

28. R.P. V to SS, Vol. XXIII, No. 250.
29. *Collected Works of M. Gandhi* XXI, 176-78.

only meet him. I saw Begum Mohamed Ali and secretary Mr. Hayat coming out of the detention room.

'Waltair is a beauty spot in Andhra. It is a sanatorium. I envied the Maulana for his arrest at such a lovely place. He was contemplating staying at Waltair a few days to rest and complete his accounts of the deputation. But the unexpectedly long stay in Bengal and the Moplah outbreak had rendered it impossible.

'God had willed it otherwise. He wanted to give the Maulana enforced rest. And I know that he is happy in his detention.

'Is it not funny, that he who has not only been himself peaceful but has endeavoured, and that successfully, to ensure peace among others and who has been a pattern of good behaviour. A Government that is evil has no room for good men and women except in its prisons.

'This imprisonment therefore may safely be regarded as a preliminary to the establishment of Swaraj. Only the Swaraj parliament can unlock the jail gate, and relieve the Brothers and their fellow-prisoners with becoming honours. For this is a fight to the finish.'

The arrest of Ali Brothers touched every Indian heart. To Gandhi it heralded 'the dawn of Swaraj'.[30]

In *Young India* of 29 September Gandhi wrote:[31] 'The Ali Brothers are to be charged with having tampered the loyalty of the sepoy and with having uttered sedition,' but the National Congress, he pointed out, 'began to tamper with the loyalty of the sepoy in September last year, that the Central Khilafat Committee began it earlier and that I began it earlier still. . . . The Conference at Karachi merely repeated the Congress declaration in terms of Islam. . . .' Gandhi declared in the article that 'sedition has become the creed of the Congress. Every non-cooperator is pledged to preach disaffection towards the Government established by law. . . . But this is no new discovery. Lord Chelmsford knew it. Lord Reading knows it.' Gandhi concluded:

'We ask for no quarter; we expect none from Government. . . . We must reiterate from a thousand platforms the formula of the

30. See his article 'Victory for Ali Brothers,' *Navajivan*, 25 September 1921 (*Collected Works*, XXI, 196-200).

31. *Collected Works*, XXI, 221-23.

Ali Brothers regarding the sepoys, and we must spread disaffection openly and systematically till it pleases the Government to arrest us.'

All the leading politicians of India headed by Gandhi issued a Manifesto on 6 October 1921 stating that it was the inherent right of everyone to express his opinion without restraint about the propriety of a citizen to offer his services to the Government.

For two days Mohamed Ali spoke before a jury at the trial in Karachi. Everyone expected the sentence of transportation for life. But the jury which consisted of five—one Englishman, two Goanese Christians and two others—gave a unanimous verdict of not guilty on the charge of tampering with the loyalty of troops, but on other charges of sedition, etc., Mohamed Ali, along with others, was sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment. His speech is remarkable for its courage, clarity and conviction, for its serious content and ready wit. It was read with avidity. Pamphlets were printed and translations came out in several languages. In this speech Mohamed Ali was so truthful, natural and spontaneous that the people loved his defiance of the Magistrate and admired his essential humility at the same time. We need not attempt to summarise the speech here as the full text has already been published.[32] Here we need note the fact that a man of the eminence of Mohamed Ali was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment which meant physical labour like any other criminal in a jail. The point did not escape the Secretary of State, Mr Montagu, who telegraphed the Viceroy:

'I notice that the Ali Brothers have been convicted and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment. I say again I do not wish to interfere, but I want to ask you to consider whether for a political misdemeanant, however great a scoundrel, rigorous imprisonment is the right treatment. As I have stated on another occasion what is wanted is even more rigorous segregation from contact from the outer world than in the case of an ordinary criminal but in other respects lighter treatment. I should like you to consider treating them as first-class political misdemeanants;

32. *Writing and Speeches*, pp. 207-44.

but perhaps you consider this would be misunderstood. Anyhow if you would consider it I would be grateful.'[33]

Lord Reading agreed to change the sentence into simple imprisonment though this was not announced publicly at the time for reasons he gave in his reply to Montagu's suggestion. Wrote Lord Reading:

'Reference your private and personal telegram of 3rd instant. I have, from the moment I read the sentences, been considering whether rigorous imprisonment ought not to be changed to simple imprisonment. The difficulty of treating the Ali Brothers and other political prisoners as first-class misdemeanants is that, I fear you would be giving the greatest inducement to non-cooperationists to go to prison. Rigorous imprisonment is from all I gather severe. Imagine the difference if a prisoner became a martyr to the cause and lived pleasantly except that he was in confinement. In the case of the Ali Brothers the general opinion is that the sentences of two years are moderate and might have been much more severe. I am of opinion that a wrong impression would be created if I intervened at this moment. Nevertheless, I do not like the notion of rigorous imprisonment which, I gather, is hard labour for these men, and have caused notice to be given to the jail authorities which will moderate physical hardships. This notification however is not publicly known or announced.'[34]

At a meeting of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and Central Khilafat Committee in Delhi resolutions were passed in September congratulating the Ali Brothers on their imprisonment. The time was not yet ripe for civil disobedience. In October, in the Khilafat meeting in Bombay, Abul Kalam Azad stated that the subject of propaganda in the Army had been discussed at Gandhi's residence where it was decided that the time was not yet to call out the sepoys. At Bombay bonfires were made of European cloth and there was serious rioting when the Prince of Wales arrived there the following month. At the Provincial Khilafat Committee at Agra in October Abul Kalam Azad, who presided, took the line that Hindu-Muslim unity was not only a political necessity but also a

33. Telegram P. No. 1557, 3 November 1921, from SS to V. MSS Eur E 238.

34. R.P. Tele. P. No. 1090, 8 November, V to SS.

religious injunction of Islam. In December of the same year, very similar resolutions were passed at an All-India Khilafat Conference and at a Session of the All-India Muslim League at Ahmedabad. Hakim Ajmal Khan was the President of the Khilafat Conference and Hasrat Mohani presided over the Muslim League Session. The Subjects Committee of the former passed a resolution to declare 'independence without foreigh control,' but a somewhat similar resolution was thrown out by the Subjects Committee of the Muslim League, while the resolution was also ruled out of order at the Khilafat Conference by the President. For this act Hakim Ajmal Khan was subjected to such bitter criticism that he left the pandal. Resolutions were also passed by both bodies congratulating the Ali Brothers on their imprisonment and Kemal Pasha on his successes, and expressing allegiance to the Khalifah.

There was general unrest, and agitation was further intensified in consequence of the arrest of Ali Brothers. Gandhi missed Shaukat Ali more than anyone else.

'O! for Shaukat Ali,' he wrote in *Young India*, 'I have felt the gravest need of Maulana Shaukat Ali by my side. I can wield no influence over the Mussulmans except through a Mussulman. . . . No Mussulman knows me through and through as Shaukat Ali does.'[35]

The general theory that between the Brothers, Mohamed Ali provided the brain while the bulky Shaukat Ali represented the brawn was after all not true—like all generalisations!

While Shaukat Ali had the confidence of Gandhi, Mohamed Ali's commitment to him was by no means lukewarm. Answering a question by a press correspondent about the non-co-operation movement, while he was on his way as prisoner from Karachi to Bijapur jail, Mohamed Ali is reported to have said :

> 'Only those who are outside can talk about the condition of the movement. All that I can say is that after the Prophet (on whom be peace) I consider it my duty to carry out the commands of Gandhiji.'[36]

35. *Collected Works of M. Gandhi*, XX, 479.
36. Abdul Majid Daryabadi, *Mohamed Ali—A Personal Diary*, I, 107.

Chapter Ten

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND RETREAT

[1922]

Life in Karachi Prison—Preparations to Launch Civil Disobedience Movement—Bi Amman, Mohamed Ali's Mother Appears on the Scene —Massacre of the Police at Chauri Chaura—Gandhi's Call for Retreat—Muslim Frustration after Suspension of the Movement—Irregularities in Khilafat Funds and Allegations against Seth Chotani—Indian Government's Offensive against Mohamed Ali's Character—Troubles in Turkey—Mustafa Kemal's Stand on Khilafat—Abolition of the Sultanate—Khalifah Escapes to Malta —Mohamed Ali's Life in Jail—An Adventure in Authorship

ONCE again Mohamed Ali was in jail—a welcome change from the confusion and distraction of the hectic activity of a whole year. He had travelled thousands of miles and had addressed millions of people. There was not a day when he did not attend four to five public meetings. Such a high pitch of life was difficult, if not entirely impossible, to maintain over a period of time. Mohamed Ali was making no empty boast when he said, 'Our movement is the only live movement of the last two generations at least for it has moved the masses in their millions. But our movement is chiefly to be measured by the amount of fear that it has succeeded in removing. It was *fear* that had made 320 millions of our people the slaves of a hundred thousand Englishmen. That fear, thank God, is fast disappearing. India's thraldom is *sure* to disappear after that. This is the truest measure.'[1]

Fear had indeed disappeared. This is how a contemporary witness describes an everyday scene in a street in Lucknow:

1. Letter to Dr Abdul Hamid Said in Rome. A copy of this letter was sent by India Office to Director, Intelligence Bureau in India.

'It is evening. In the Aminabad Square boys are dolefully singing a poem in the familiar tune of Nawab Mirza Shauq's *Mathnavi* "The Poison of Love". The song written by an unknown poet has suddenly sprung into popularity and has caught the public imagination:

"Said the Mother of Mohamed Ali,
Son! lay down your life for Khilafat!
Shaukat Ali is also with you,
Son! lay down your life for Khilafat!
Grieve not for your old mother,
With the *Kalimah* on your lips lay down your life for Khilafat.
You must not fail in this trial,
Son! lay down your life for Khilafat!
Had I seven sons,
All would I have sacrificed for Khilafat.
These are the traditions of the faith of Ahmad (the Prophet).
Son! lay down your life for Khilafat.
I will create a consternation on the Day of Resurrection,
I will lead you before God Almighty,
I shall take this Government to task (for injustice).
Son! lay down your life for Khilafat!"[2]

'As the boys sing the song hundreds of passers-by stop and listen. A police van appears on the scene and takes most of them to jail. Every day from afternoon to late at night the same scene recurs with monotonous regularity. Going to jail had become children's play. A thing which once inspired awe and fear, and people used to tremble at the very thought of it, had now become a mere joke. When Mohamed Ali came to the Congress (in 1919) he brought with him a whole nation of Muslims. When Mohamed Ali went to jail even fire turned into a veritable garden for the whole community. Not hundreds but thousands of Muslims, well-to-do and belonging to good families—graduates and lawyers,

2. بولیں اماں محمد علی کی   جان بیٹا خلافت پہ دے دو
ساتھ تیرے ہے شوکت علی بھی   جان بیٹا خلافت پہ دے دو
بوڑھی اماں کا کچھ غم نہ کرنا   کلمہ پڑھ کر خلافت پہ مرنا
پورے اس امتحاں پہ اُترنا   جان بیٹا خلافت پہ دے دو
ہوتے میرے اگر سات بیٹے   کرتی سب کو خلافت پہ صدقے
ہیں یہی دین احمد کے رستے   جان بیٹا خلافت پہ دے دو
حشر میں حشر برپا کروں گی   پیشِ حق تم کو لے کے چلوں گی
اس حکومت پہ دعویٰ کروں گی   جان بیٹا خلافت پہ دے دو

barristers and doctors, scholars and students—cheerfully courted arrest in the cause of Khilafat, and jails began to fill to the point of overflowing.'[3]

Lord Reading wrote to the Secretary of State : 'It will be very interesting to see what happens on the arrest of the Ali Brothers. There is no doubt that the apologies have weakened their position and their prestige. . . . Further, the excesses and outrages committed by the Moplahs upon Hindus and especially the forcible conversions . . . has made the Hindu thoughtful and anxious. . . .'[4]

How much the prestige had suffered and how much Mohamed Ali had fallen in public estimation could be judged from the following extract from a confidential report dated 7 March 1922 by the Inspector General of Prisons, Bombay:

'On February 10, 1922, a very large crowd including women and children had gathered in front of the Karachi jail in not a peaceable mood.

'They had heard a rumour that Ali Brothers had been killed and buried in the jail. The crowd had no leader. They were yelling and shouting. In order to avoid a riot and bloodshed the brothers were shown to them. They were told to ask the crowd to disperse. Mohamed Ali spoke to them, told them he was in good health and the crowd slowly dispersed.'[5]

While the prestige of the Karachi prisoners was undoubtedly high in the country, their position in jail was indeed a matter of sorrow.

Young India reproduced the following telegram received from Karachi by post because it would not be sent by the authorities:

'Maulana Mohamed Ali reduced 25 lbs. in jail. . . .

'Medical Officer recommended groundnuts or extracts of cheese by way of food for Maulana Mohamed Ali on account of diabetes. Superintendent not disposed but after all provided groundnuts worth one anna per day and on Maulana's insistence raised it to two annas. This serves as his morning meal.

'Maulana Shaukat Ali, Doctor Kitchlew, Maulvi Nisar Ahmed,

3. Abdul Majid Daryabadi, *Mohamed Ali—A Personal Diary*, I, 106.
4. R.P. Reading to Montagu, No. 24, dated 15 September 1921.
5. R.P. Reeding to Peel, 22 June 1922, Vol. V, No. 14.

Pir Ghulam Majid were asked on Saturday the 28th to submit to search of their person, a practice commonly followed in jail in case of convicts. This consists in making the prisoners absolutely naked with the exception of a *langoti* (loin cloth) made loose. The prisoners in this condition are asked to raise hands and open their mouths as though to show if there was anything hidden anywhere. This humiliation Maulana Shaukat Ali and his companions were saved so far. On Saturday the 28th on being asked to submit to this they refused. On Monday the 30th their person was forcibly searched and as punishment for refusing voluntarily to submit to this indignity, humiliation, the forenamed leaders have been confined to solitary cells for one month. . . .

'Maulana Mohamed Ali protests and demands like treatment.

'The leaders in jail ready to obey all jail rules except those that offend against their religion or against their sense of honour and dignity as Indians or human beings.'[6]

The Government was intent on putting the prisoners through fire little realising that pain does not bend a proud patriot.

The year 1922 opened with non-co-operation and Khilafat agitation flourishing all over India. People were courting arrest by the thousands. Preparations were being made at several places, particularly at Bardoli, to launch mass civil disobedience. Early in the year a lengthy manifesto was published over the signatures of Seth Chotani, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr M.A. Ansari, Dr Syed Mahmud, and A.H.S. Khatri, which summed up the terms which the signatories thought that the Allies were likely to impose on Turkey and exhorted the Muslims to concentrate on the following immediate work:

(1) Collect fifty lakhs for the Angora Fund;
(2) Be prepared to fill the jails at the bidding of Gandhi;
(3) Preserve non-violence at all costs;
(4) Preserve inviolate the sacred spirit of Hindu-Muslim unity; and
(5) Follow Mahatma Gandhi unflinchingly.

During this period *Bi Amman*, the mother of the Ali Brothers,

6. *Collected Works of M. Gandhi*, XXII, 355-56.

appeared for the first time in public meetings and became a formidable symbol of the Khilafat movement. At the same time, according to the *Paisa Akhbar* of Lahore, placards bearing the words, 'Service in the Police and the Army is *haram*' (forbidden) were tied to the collars of stray dogs in that city.[7]

Abul Kalam Azad was sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment in February. There was excitement and agitation all over the country. It was particularly intense in the Presidency of Madras, where it had been stimulated by the Moplah revolt, and Bombay where Bardoli was being prepared by Gandhi for civil disobedience. While the whole of India was involved in an unprecedented expression of non-confidence in the British Government the only vocal opposition to non-co-operation on the part of Muslims came from Peshawar, where, in the middle of February, a meeting of the Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyah condemned it as being diametrically opposed to the Quran which, according to it, insisted on loyalty to the Government established by the law of the land.[8]

Everywhere in the country the masses had been roused to a high pitch and agitation, mostly non-violent, was proceeding apace. Suddenly like a bolt from the blue came the massacre of the Police at Chauri Chaura at the hands of an excited mob. The demonstration of indiscipline outraged Gandhi's sense of non-violence. The people were not ready, he said, for a disciplined struggle and from Bardoli he announced his decision to postpone the civil disobedience movement. Lord Reading used the occasion to arrest Gandhi himself. He was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. Thus the movement ended in apparent failure. But things were never the same again. These events formed a psychological watershed in the development of modern India. The 'colonial' mentality had been thrown off, an adult nation had been born.

The movement was suspended, but the problems were not settled. An overwhelming majority of the people who had filled

7. D.I.B. Report, p. 188.

8. Ibid., p. 190.

the jails were Muslims. There was an uneasy feeling in the air that they had been used for purposes other than Khilafat. Swaraj did not seem to move the Muslim hearts. There was a common joke at this time in the Punjab that *Swaraj* meant *Swah* (ashes) for the Muslims and *Raj* for the Hindus!

The lesser leaders who were still free tried to maintain the momentum of the movement. At the All-India Khilafat Conference at Delhi in February there was talk of reviving *hijrat* after consulting Mustafa Kemal Pasha; the boycott of British goods and the emphasis on enlistment of Khilafat members and the collection of Angora Fund were the main planks. At the Ulema's Conference at Ajmer in March, Maulana Abdul Bari made a violently pessimistic speech. It was reported that Gandhi had visited Ajmer to take the Maulana to task for his violent speech. The following statement which appeared in the *Tribune* of 12 March gives some indication of the mood of the moment:

'I had agreed with Mahatma Gandhi that until I become hopeless of the success of the non-violent non-cooperation movement, I would not do anything against it openly or secretly. Proceedings of the Bardoli and Delhi meetings had depressed me and I said so in my speeches. I have now met Gandhiji and he has fully satisfied me that further efforts on our part can make the movement a success. Under these circumstances it is the duty of the public strictly to abstain from violence in every shape or form. I am determined to continue preaching non-violence, so long as I am convinced of success of the pacific movement, as I have already made it quite clear in my speeches.'[9]

A letter published in the *Leader*, Allahabad, in the middle of March by Kidwai gives some idea of the Muslim sentiment at this time:

'It is a great pity that most of the Indian Muslims, notwithstanding their remarkable after-war sacrifice and enthusiasm for the cause, have yet failed to understand the full import of the Khilafat question. The key to the question is that it is an inter-

9. Ibid., p. 192.

national question first and foremost, and, being Islamic, can in no case be confined within the Himalayan boundaries. It cannot be surprising if Mr. Gandhi and other Hindu leaders fail to understand the international significance of Islam, but it seems that many Muslim followers of Gandhi have also lost sight of the special characteristic of Islam and closed their eyes to the ever-changing European influences which, and which alone, have thrust this question upon us and which we can never ignore.

'I cannot but help reminding Mr. Gandhi that his programme of removing untouchability or picketing liquor shops or boycotting Councils and Universities or even of wearing nothing but khaddar cannot have the slightest effect on the Khilafat question for India. The idea of converting all Indian Muslims to Jainist beliefs may be a very good method of solving the Khilafal question for India, but fortunately for Islam it is not practicable.'[10]

The Bardoli announcement caused confusion and disappointment. It came at a time when Mohamed Ali was in jail. Although there was no cessation as such of activity, the cause of Khilafat, whose inner contradictions appeared to dissolve under his dynamic touch, now seemed to baffle the lesser leaders. Events both in India and Turkey were moving against them. In India, Gandhi, who once called Khilafat the question of questions, had now relegated it to the background; in Turkey there were portents which were disturbing for any believer in the idea of Khilafat. These dangers and difficulties had to be confronted and a lead provided to the people whose emotions had been roused to white heat during the Khilafat agitation. But the lead, such as follows, which was the result of the joint deliberations of the Bengal Provincial Congress and Khilafat Committees was clearly not adequate to meet the situation. In a joint letter issued at the time the Secretaries of the two organisations said :

'We wish to make it abundantly clear that Khilafat is unattainable without Swaraj and that Swaraj without Khilafat would be weak, inglorious and transient. We wish to point out that the problem of the Khilafat cannot be solved without the deliverance of the Jazirat-ul-Arab form non-Muslim control and if Mustapha

10. Ibid., pp. 193-94.

Kemal is compelled to accept a treaty which abandons Jazirat-ul-Arab, our struggle for religious freedom will still continue and Khilafat can then alone be saved by the attainment of Swaraj.'[11]

The Working Committee of the Khilafat met in Bombay in March. Gandhi had by then been arrested. Abul Kalam was also in jail, all the five Secretaries of the Central Khilafat Committee had been imprisoned and it is no wonder that those left behind could think of no more than this uninspiring programme.

'Khilafat Committees and Khilafat workers should carry out the constructive programme of non-cooperation vigorously so that the following items of the programme be complete be the 31st May 1922, and the hands of the Central Khilafat Committee be strengthened to advance the steps and adopt further measures for the success of the movement :

'(*i*) To enlist at least one crore of Khilafat members and organise Khilafat Committees in all the towns and villages throughout the country.

'(*ii*) To preach and popularise the use of Khaddar and boycott of all foreign cloth.

'(*iii*) To revise and organise Khilafat Volunteers Corps so that only those people may be enrolled as volunteers who believe in the programme of non-violent non-cooperation in word and deed and follow the principles of Shariat in practice.

'(*iv*) To introduce religious and national education independent of Government control.

'(*v*) To induce the Mussalmans to settle their litigation in accordance with the commandments of Shariat and to make arrangements for that.

'(*vi*) For the success of the Khilafat cause to devise all legitimate means for promoting unity among Hindus, Sikhs, Parsees and other nationalities of India for the attainment of Swaraj.

'(*vii*) All Provincial Khilafat Committees should be instructed to send in their weekly or monthly reports regularly on the above to the Central Khilafat Office, Bombay.'[12]

The Muslims had lost a sense of direction, they were groping in the dark; the two men who had the necessary charisma to inspire masses to a sense of endeavour and sacrifice were already in jail; and the organisation of Khilafat was certainly not strong enough

11. Ibid., p. 196.

12. Ibid., pp. 197-98.

to survive the loss of leadership. Once again Muslims who had filled the jails by the thousands were wondering what would come out of this colossal upheaval. The feeble attempts at maintaining a semblance of Hindu-Muslim unity were too bizarre to be convincing. In May, Pandit Motilal Nehru was elected member of the Working Committee of the Central Khilafat Organisation in place of Hasrat Mohani who had been arrested; at about the same time V.J. Patel was elected member of the Committee *vice* Gandhi who had been convicted.

Muslims were carrying out civil disobedience while the author of the movement had called it off. The Muslims were going to jails for Khilafat. Their demands had not been met. How could they call off the movement? If they did, the Khilafat Conference would appear an organisation subordinate to the Indian Congress, and this they could not afford to do. And yet they were not in a position to continue to offer non-co-operation while the Congress had completely withdrawn from the field. Maulana Bari sums up these frustrations in a rambling letter he wrote in the middle of June to Seth Chotani in Bombay:[13]

'I consider it very necessary to tell you certain things. The goal before us is to give protection to the Turks and there are only two ways of doing this. Firstly, we should compel those who help the Greeks to give up giving help by changing their opinion, or by force, and secondly to give so much strength to Mustapha Kemal that he may defeat the Greeks and their supporters. I understand that Muslims of India have not got the power to strengthen the hands of Angora. A small amount is not enough to give them sufficient strength to be of some use to the Turks. By means of non-cooperation we cannot prevent the Allies from giving help to the Greeks. So far no impression has been created on the Allies. As far as I can make out the non-cooperation movement is dying down. Many people think the same thing. The non-cooperation movement may be allowed to go on as it will be of some use in future, but there is this fear also that civil disobedience may develop into a suicidal policy and that non-cooperation may become a theory only as has happened before now. Under these circumstances if the Turks got support by the cooperation of the cooperators and non-

13 Ibid., pp. 204-05.

cooperators I do not see any harm. An opportunity has arisen to bring round the Sharif of Mecca and the Amir Feisul. Their relations with the Turks should be made pleasant. I have exchanged views with Sharif on this subject and I hope to bring about a settlement.'

The writer then pointed out that while weakness in the Khilafat organisation would be harmful to the Khilafat cause, yet the aloofness of Muslims from the Congress would be even more harmful.

'Hindus will succeed in attaining Swaraj and that Swaraj will not be in any way beneficial to us. Malaviya by his cleverness is usurping the position [of Gandhi] but Muslims have no faith in him nor can they have as they had in Gandhi. Let us see whether we have still to cling to this movement [non-violent non-cooperation] or some other way is found out of the difficulty. In my opinion it would be far more beneficial if the Muslims improve their own status, Indian Muslim in India, Arabs in Arabia, Afghans in Afghanistan and Turks in Turkey. They should then unite. For the present whatever concessions could be obtained for the Turks they should by obtained, but we should not ruin ourselves for their sake. The condition of the Arabs should be improved so that the Arabian peninsula may remain safe from foreign aggression.'

The letter concluded:

'After the imprisonment of Mohamed Ali *khadi* was put on, after the arrest of Gandhi *charkha* was used and after the arrest of Fazal Hussain[14] [Hasrat Mohani] use of mill-made cloth was given up. Such courses will bring no result.'

In July, Marmaduke Pickthall presided over the Sind Khilafat Conference. He gave the good news to the Muslims that British public opinion was more favourable to the Turks than it was two years ago and the credit very largely went, he said, to the efforts of Mr Montagu, the Secretary of State for India. Turning to the situation in India the translator of the Holy Quran had the following to say:

'I know there are some people who think it wrong for Muslims

14. The right name is Fazl-ul-Hasan.

to accept the leadership of a Hindu. But I think that a Hindu saint who lives upon the higher plane is a better guide for Muslims than a Muslim sinner who lives upon the lower plane, for upon the higher plane there is but one law for Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Jews or any man and that law is the divine law revealed in the Quran-e-Sharif.'[15]

In August, Bashir Ahmad Khan, President of the Anjuman-i-Islamia at Gurdaspur, in an open letter to Hakim Ajmal Khan, stated that the Hindus were the bitterest enemies of Turkey and accused them of having waited for centuries for the destruction of Islam in India. Mushir Hasan Kidwai, writing to Seth Chotani, said, 'In the head of our brothers no other thing except *charkha* (spinning wheel) comes. May the curse of God be on this *charkha*.' Writing to Dr Ansari, he said, 'If such coldness is shown towards Khilafat I will shortly raise a standard of revolt against the Khilafat Committee and the Congress.'

The movement revived for a while during the months of September/October, the period when Kemal Pasha was clinching his victory over the Greeks. The Central Khilafat Committee, in its meeting at Delhi in October, passed a resolution for the presentation of a sword of honour and two aeroplanes to Mustafa Kemal. While the flame was rekindled for a while, little did the leaders of Khilafat realise, even at this late hour, that Kemal's victory was a prelude to the defeat of the Khilafat.

To the many frustrations of the followers of Khilafat during this crucial year was added the disclosure that the funds to which they had contributed so generously were after all not entirely used for the purpose for which they were collected.

In November 1921, records of the Cental Khilafat Committee were seized in a search by the Government. At that time a balance of five lakhs of rupees was in hand but it was pointed out that the method of keeping the accounts left much to be desired. Among the means used to collect funds was the issue of Khilafat notes of

15. D.I.B. Report, p. 205.

various denominations which were repayable when Swaraj was attained. On 1 February 1922, the *Bombay Chronicle* published an audited statement of accounts of the Central Khilafat Committee which showed the total receipts for the year 1920 at Rs 6,43,706-1-4, and the total expediture for the year at Rs 4,73,688-5-8, leaving a balance of Rs 1,70,077-11-8. During 1921, the total receipts were shown as amounting to Rs 20,99,789-4-5 and the balance on 31 December 1921 as Rs 9,28,480-3-2. The statement also showed that Rs 5,34,857-13-10 had been remitted to Smyrna and Rs 3,75,231-3-9 to Angora (Ankara).

In July 1922, there was an acrimonious discussion at a meeting of the Central Khilafat Committee at Bombay about the Angora Fund. Allegations were made that it had been used for purposes other than those for which the Fund was raised. It was pointed out that the balance in the Angora and Smyrna Funds was then about 16 lakhs of rupees (1.6 million), while the balance in the Khilafat Fund was only a few thousands. It was decided, therefore, to transfer one lakh from the Angora Fund to the Khilafat and to send ten lakhs to Angora. At about the same time Seth Chotani came under severe criticism for his administration of the Angora Fund. Allegations were made that he had diverted some of it to his own personal account. Maulana Abdul Bari wrote to Chotani urging him to remit the money to Angora to allay public anxiety. It did not seem quite fair that while the Muslims should be proposing the despatch of an Angora Legion from India to assist Kemal Pasha, their leaders should hold back the fund collected to aid the Angora Government. During the following year it was established that Chotani had diverted Angora funds to his own use. He handed over to the Central Khilafat Committee two saw mills at Sewri near Bombay valued at Rs. 18 lakhs as compensation. From the trouble that the Central Khilafat Committee experienced in disposing them of, the valuation appears to have been fictitious.

Dr Riaz-ul-Hasan who worked in the publicity department of

the Central Khilafat Committee at this time holds only one person responsible for the diversion of funds—Ahmad Mian Chotani, the younger brother of Seth Chotani. It is held that, in the absence of his elder brother on the Second Khilafat Deputation in England, Mian Ahmad Chotani took a decision on his own to use the Khilafat Funds to meet an emergency in business. No other leader was involved in this scandal which in any case took place during Mohamed Ali's absence in jail. According to this source, a total of Rs. 5.6 million was collected up to 1924, out of which 3 million went to Mustafa Kemal and the rest was spent on publicity at home.[16]

Such a sorry state of affairs provided ideal ground to the Indian Government to launch a propaganda offensive and create more confusion and frustration in the Muslim mind. Answering a solicited question in the Central Assembly about the release of Ali Brothers, the Home Member, Sir William Vicent, came out with a tirade against Mohamed Ali. In a long speech, in answer to a simple question, Sir William started tracing the history of Ali Brothers since 1911, and repeated charges which, in spite of Mohamed Ali's insistence, were not made available to him either by the Enquiry Committee in 1919 or subsequently by the Secretary of State himself. And yet the Home Member of the Government of India, in complete disregard of all propriety levelled charges which he knew were completely unfounded. But no scruples were to prevent him to initiate, at what was an opportune moment for the Government, a propaganda campaign against a person who was in jail and was not even aware of the mischief that was being deliberately caused. He accused him of treasonable practices such as association with Obeidullah Sindhi, the head of the provincial government in exile for India; association with the people involved in the Silk Letter Conspiracy; conspiring with the Amir of Afghanistan to invade India; assisting the King's enemies; fomenting intrigue against Government; and last of betraying his own followers. This is how

16. Daily *Jang*, Rawalpindi, 25 September 1970.

the mischievous speech ended :

'When I think of the secret support and encouragement which they gave to the King's enemies when hundreds of thousands of British and Indian soldiers were daily risking their lives, many alas making the great sacrifice, when I think of those unfortunate Mahajirin, whose white bones are strewn up the Khyber and on the way to Kabul, who were induced to migrate by these two gentlemen and their followers, men who themselves never did a Hijrat further than Paris and London, when I think of the money extracted from poor Muhammadans in this country much of which has been squandered in various ways in Europe and elsewhere, money of which no audited account has ever yet been published, when I think lastly of the many Hindus dishonoured and killed in Malabar and of the thousands of Moplahs misled and driven to death and ruin by the incitements of Mohamed Ali, Shaukat Ali and those who think like them, then, Sir, in truth, I marvel at the simplicity and the crass folly of the Muslim population that submits to such treatment and accepts such men as leaders.'[17]

WHILE Muslims in India were being torn by dissensions and the Government was trying desperately to break their resolve and discredit their leaders, the Turks had their own problems.

Kemal was fighting on two fronts. He had to contend with the enemy within and the enemy without. The British Government had tried at one time to get rid of Kemal, the short cut to defeating the struggle of Turkey. An Indian Muslim, Mustafa Saghir, was commissioned to kill Kemal. He was hanged in May 1921.[18]

The Indian Muslims had fought the Turks in the battlefields of Syria and Mesopotamia, one of them had made an attempt on the life of Kemal Pasha. Mustafa Kemal could not be blamed, therefore, if he did not entirely share the zeal of the Indian Muslims for the cause of Khilafat. Kemal had his own ideas on the subject. He had a fixed, positive, realistic aim—to rid Turkey of the invader and give it the dignity of a free modern nation. With the adoption of the new Constitution on 20 January 1921,

17. Legislative Assembly Proceedings, 9 March 1922.
18. *The Life of Ataturk*, p. 115.

the principle that sovereignty belongs to the people had been clearly conceded. But a democratic government had yet to be set up in Turkey. Despite the declared idea of national sovereignty, the Sultanate and Caliphate were still accepted as constitutionally existing institutions. Kemal's correct position up to this time was that of an ordinary general sentenced to death by the Caliph's Shaikh-ul-Islam despite the appeals of Indian Muslims to the Caliph to co-operate with him and encourage and recognise his party. But now Kemal had won a war. The Alies invited the Sultan's Government to Lausanne for peace negotiations. The British refused to recognise the Nationalist Government as the sole representative of the nation. But the Sultan had contributed little, if anything, to the War that Kemal waged with such singular success. How could he, then, be disallowed to represent the country at the council of peace? On 1 November 1922, he proposed the abolition of the Sultanate. When the theologians and jurists started indulging in hair-splitting in the Committee room, Kemal took the floor, and, climbing on top of the table before him, made the following declaration:

> 'Gentlemen, sovereignty has never been given to any nation by scholarly disputation. It is always taken by force and with coercion. . . . The Turkish nation has now taken back its usurped sovereignty by rebellion. This is a fact. The question facing us now is not whether or not this sovereignty will be left to the nation, but the simpler matter of declaring that which is a fact. . . . If those who have assembled here recognise this natural fact like everyone else, all will be fine. If not, what is natural will happen anyhow, with the only difference that a few heads will probably have to be chopped off.'[19]

The abolition of the Sultanate did not produce any important repercussion in the country. On 17 November Vehideddin, the Caliph, escaped to Malta under British protection in the warship 'Malaya'. He was deposed from the Caliphate and Abdul Majid

19. Mustafa Kemal's famous six-day speech before the Second Party Congress, October 1927. Official English translation, pp. 577-78.

was chosen Caliph. The Indian Muslims clung to a straw. A caliph had been deposed but the institution had remained intact. 'We are not Turkish nationalists fighting over a little space in which their race could breathe and live,' argued Mohamed Ali. 'We were Indians and subjects of the King of England who had been at war with the King of Turkey.'[20]

But the King of Turkey and the Caliph of Islam was the same person. If he could not be the sovereign of his own land, how could he claim the allegiance, in a vacuum, of all Muslims in the world? The problem was being debated with much concern and anxiety in India and Egypt, but Kemal was supremely unconcerned because he was quite clear in his mind, and he openly declared :

'I repeat once more quite definitely that the people of Turkey possess unconditional sovereignty—sovereignty does not admit any sharing in any meaning or form, any shade or kind. Let a man be caliph, let him be what he will, no one can share in the ruling of the destiny of this nation.'[21]

When on 18 November 1922, the Turkish National Assembly debated in closed session the election of a new Caliph, a number of members, according to Mustafa Kemal, 'were seriously discussing the question of Caliphate. The reverend *hocas* particularly were on their guard as they had found a question very dear to their field of specialization. . . . They were speculating about bringing the new Caliph to Ankara. He should, they said, even be brought to the headship of the State. There was, they said, great excitement in Turkey and all over the Islamic world about the question of Caliphate. Serious measures should, therefore, be taken, etc., etc. Some of the speech-makers explained the necessity of ascertaining the Caliph's attributes and prerogatives. . . . My declaration can be summed up in the following words : "The Assembly is the Assembly of the people of Turkey. Its authority extends only and solely over the Turkish people and their destiny. It cannot appropriate to itself, by its own act, authority extending over the entire Muslim world. The Turkish nation . . . would

20. *My Life : A Fragment*, p. 146. 21. *The Life of Ataturk*, p. 176.

not trust its own destiny to the hands of a person called Caliph.... The claim that because of this there is or will be excitement in the Muslim world is nothing but a lie. . . . The more we argue over the matter, the less it will appear solvable. One thing can be stated definitely: no one, even if he is called Caliph, can ever be above the sovereign rights of the people. There is absolutely no alternative to following this principle in deposing the escaped Caliph and electing a new one." '[22]

Had the proceedings of the closed session reached Mohamed Ali, he might have modified his views about the Caliphate for he was still writing at this stage:

'As we had more than once made it clear, our sympathy with Turkey was not political or territorial but religious, for the Sovereign of Turkey was the successor of the Prophet and the Commander of the Faithful. It was our religious duty to prevent the further disintegration of the temporal power of the Khilafat which was indispensable for the defence of our faith, to maintain the inviolability of the sacred regions of Islam and to see that the dying injunction of the Prophet with regard to exclusive Muslim sovereignty over Jazirat-ul-Arab (or the Island of Arabia including Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia) was not disregarded.'[23]

Mohamed Ali's views were clearly in conflict with Kemal's, and the Indian Muslims had soon to pay for their lack of communication with the leader of New Turkey.

IGNORANCE is bliss. Mohamed Ali was not aware of what was going on in India or Turkey or for that matter anywhere in the world. His world was a small, dark and dingy cell in jail and his problem was to adjust himself to his new surroundings. In all his life he had never eaten a meal alone. In Chhindwara the detention meant withdrawal from political life—his brother, his family and, most of all, his mother were with him, not to say anything of the constant stream of visitors. But here after the chores of jail life what was one to do in the solitude of one's cell in the

22. M. Kemal, *Nutuk*, English translation, pp. 584-85.
23. *My Life : A Fragment*, p. 138.

long winter nights? Mohamed Ali never allowed depression for a moment to take the better of him. His faith in God was deep and profound; his devotion and dedication to the person of the Prophet was something which defies description; for those alone who have experienced that rare ecstasy of the soul can appreciate the courage and conviction that it inspires.

In his lone moments Mohamed Ali established a dialogue with his God and his Prophet. In prayer and meditation he discovered a unique peace of mind. He communicated some of the haunting beauty, the magical cadence and the rare charm of this experience in some of the poems that came forth, not through the conscious craft of a poet, but through the irresistible urge and compulsion which seizes a spirit and commands it to create.

Being intensely personal such an eloquent and spontaneous expression of the soul becomes truly universal, but the beauty of his verse is impossible to convey in a translation; the best one could do is to paraphrase the mood in order to give the reader some idea of the values that mattered most to Mohamed Ali at this time:

تنہائی کے سب دن ہیں تنہائی کی سب راتیں
اب ہونے لگیں اُن سے خلوت میں ملاقاتیں
ہر لحظہ تشفی ہے ، ہر آن تسلی ہے
ہر وقت ہے دلجوئی ، ہر دم ہیں مداراتیں
کوثر کے تقاضے ہیں ، تسنیم کے وعدے ہیں
ہر روز یہی چرچے ، ہر رات یہی باتیں
معراج کی سی حاصل سجدوں میں ہے کیفیت
اک فاسق و فاجر میں اور ایسی کراماتیں!
بے مایہ ہیں ہم لیکن شاید وہ بلا بھیجیں
بھیجی ہیں درودوں کی کچھ ہم نے بھی سوغاتیں

'All days are days of solitude, all nights nights of loneliness,
Now have begun the meetings with Him in complete privacy;
Every moment there is peace, every moment there is calm,
All the while there is attention, I am overwhelmed with condescension.
There are demands of Kausar, and there are promises of Tasnim (the springs of Paradise),

This is the topic every day and this is the discussion every night.
In my prostrations is the sensation of Ascension,
Such miracles are vouchsafed to a mere sinner!
Poor and humble though we are He might send for us in His presence,
For we too have made presents of a few prayers!'

Soon after coming to jail Mohamed Ali received news that his favourite daughter Aminah had been struck by tuberculosis. He had married her away only in 1920 and now she was struggling for dear life. There was little he could do for her. But for his complete identification with the will of God, the feeling of intense frustration in such a situation would have driven him mad. To his ailing daughter he addressed a poem:

میں ہوں مجبور پر اللہ تو مجبور نہیں
تجھ سے میں دور سہی وہ تو مگر دور نہیں
امتحاں سخت سہی پر دل مومن ہی وہ کیا
جو ہر اک حال میں اُمید سے معمور نہیں
تیری صحت ہمیں مطلوب ہے لیکن اُس کو
نہیں منظور تو پھر ہم کو بھی منظور نہیں

'I am helpless but Allah is Almighty;
I may be away from you but He is not;
The trial is indeed hard but what is a believer
If his heart be not filled with hope at all times;
I long for your health;
But if He will it not, then I submit to His will.'

Mohamed Ali then implores God:

تیری قدرت سے خدایا تیری رحمت نہیں کم
آمنہ بھی شفا پائے تو کچھ دور نہیں

'Your Bounty, O Lord! is in no way less than Your power;
It would be but a mercy, should Aminah too be spared!'

Mohamed Ali is now completely immersed in religion. Islam is the aim and ideal for which he lives. In his heart he carries the pains and sufferings of the whole Muslim world. His faith in their future is resolute and his prayers for their present are persistent. Being alone and away from his people his heart beats constantly in

unison with theirs. One day hearing, at some distance, the Muslim cry 'God is Great,' on the part of a crowd he cannot see in his confinement, he comes to the conclusion that slogans of joy are being raised to celebrate Mustafa Kemal's success in Smyrna. He prostrates himself in prayer and bursts forth in a poem which expresses his sense of gratitude and infinite pleasure at hearing what he imagined was the news:

عالم میں آج دھوم ہے فتح مبین کی
سن لی خدا نے قیدیٔ گوشہ نشین کی

'The world today is resounding with the news of Manifest Victory,
God has heard the prayer of a prisoner in his confinement.'

The news was indeed correct. Mohamed Ali goes on:

ہے نام مصطفیٰ کی یہ برکت کہ پھر خدا
یوں جڑ جما رہا ہے محمدؐ کے دین کی
تیرے کرم نے اور بھی گستاخ کر دیا
اک عرض اور ہے ابھی اس کمترین کی
اک گھر ترا یہاں بھی تو ہے اس کے باب میں
کب ہوگی لامکاں سے مشیت مکین کی

'It is through the blessings of Mustafa that God is consolidating the roots of the faith of Muhammad.
Your favours this humble servant embolden to make yet another request,
Here too there is an abode of Yours—when, then, will it receive the celestial command?'

And so when the muse seizes him, Mohamed Ali writes poetry. A collection of his poems had already appeared in 1921, and the poems that he wrote now were added to it and a revised edition was published in 1923 before Mohamed Ali left the jail.

Mohamed Ali's pervasive passion was his love for the Prophet. He talks of him in poetry, prayer and prose. His tutor, Shibli Numani, had written about the heroes of Islam—Umar Faruq, al-Mamun, al-Numan, Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, but had not brought out a biography of the Prophet—the source and foundation of all inspiration. Mohamed Ali had remonstrated with him when Shibli

came to stay with him during his Civil Service days in Baroda. Shibli had pointed out then to the young enthusiast the difficulties and the problems of research involved in such a monumental undertaking. But Mohamed Ali persevered until Shibli was prevailed upon to take up the task. But his sudden and unfortunate death in 1914 did not allow him to complete the work. By this time two volumes of the 'Life of the Prophet' by Shibli had appeared and Sulaiman Nadvi, the great successor of Shibli Numani, was engaged in completing the biography which was to take another decade of dedicated work. Mohamed Ali felt that the calm and peace which had now come his way in jail should be pressed into service to produce a biography of the Prophet. Here was an opportunity, he thought, to clear the misunderstandings that had been deliberately fostered by the Western Orientalists against Islam. Professor Margoliouth from whom Mohamed Ali had read Arabic for a while at Oxford was the worst culprit for his *Life of Mahomet* was nothing but a deliberate and malicious distortion. On his personal copy of the book written by Margoliouth, Mohamed Ali has, in his own hand, struck out 'outh' from his name and the rest 'Margoli' means 'shoot him' in Urdu. This copy should still be available in Mohamed Ali's papers in Jamia Millia Islamia, at Delhi, an institution which owes its existence to Mohamed Ali.

In his anxiety for a fair presentation of the case Mohamed Ali set about to read the Biblical literature. A letter he wrote at this time to C.F. Andrew, a Christian friend of India, is both relevant and revealing :[24]

'I had always had a great desire to go right through the Old and New Testaments—a desire whetted by my casual reading and also by the remarkably exquisite literary taste of the English translators of the early seventeenth century in the authorised version. Here I have the opportunity and the much desiderated leisure to satisfy the old longing ; and while I devote, after my

24. Mohamed Ali to C.F. Andrew—1922. Quoted by H U. Weitbrecht Stanton in *The Church Missionary Review* (London, 1922), LXXII, 298.

jail work is over, a good deal of time to Koran reading and memorizing, I am devoting perhaps as much to a study of the Bible. I have already read through the five books of Moses (on whom be God's peace). I have read all the four Gospels and the acts of the Apostles and Paul's letters. But the more I read, the more I feel the need of one or two books which could give me a correct idea of the manner in which the Old and New Testaments have come down to our own times. Who were the chroniclers? How can we satisfy ourselves about their trustworthiness? What happened to the Old Testament books when Nebuchadnezzar reached and set fire to Jerusalem and took the Jews away to Babylon? Then, again, why have only the four Gospels been included in the New Testament? There are known to be some others, as well; notably one according to St. Bernabas, rediscovered, I believe, in Egypt not long ago. How did the Twelve Disciples hand over their traditions? I use the words in its Muslim sense of *Hadees*. How are we to reconcile their discrepancies? I should, therefore, like to get from you, if possible and convenient, the loan of a few books of such a kind as would help me to understand these things from the point of view of a believer, as I know you to be, who is large-minded enough to take a rational view of them.

'Then I would like you to lend me such books as have been written from the point of view of those who do not believe, but have not been labouring under gross or irrational prejudices. . . . I might mention that I read a book in Urdu by my old friend, Professor Nawab Ali, M.A. (once of Aligarh and now of Baroda College), on the history of the Scriptures; but it was not comprehensive enough to meet my purpose; and I would prefer to have both the believer's and the non-believer's point of view represented. I regret I cannot write about any other matter and myself personally, as this letter is allowed by courtesy and at the discretion of the jail authorities as being "purely on business".'

Before, however, Mohamed Ali could even begin to write the life of the Prophet, he was released, and the work which was mainly a preliminary attempt at explaining his own antecedents for undertaking such a biography, was published posthumously.[25] And that was the end of his little adventure at authorship in jail.

25. *My Life : A Fragment.*

Chapter Eleven

RELEASE AND PRESIDENTSHIP OF THE CONGRESS

[1923-1924]

The Congress, A House Divided—Hindu Revivalist Movements and the Muslim Response—Lajpat Rai's Misgivings about Hindu-Muslim Unity—The Cocanada Congress and Mohamed Ali's Views on Contemporary Issues—The Hindu Press Reviles Mohamed Ali and Demands His Resignation from the Presidentship of the Congress—Gandhi's Comment on Mohamed Ali's Religious Views—Mohamed Ali's Misgivings about the Hindu Leadership—Gandhi Brands Muslims as a Bully—Shift of Emphasis from Hindu-Muslim Unity to the Spinning Wheel—The Hamdard *and the* Comrade *Revived—Gandhi's Stay with Mohamed Ali in Delhi—His First Fast and the Arguments of the Ali Brothers against the Fast—The Death of Bi Amman—Kemal Elected President of Turkey—The Aga Khan's Letter to Kemal—The Abolition of Khilafat—Reactions in Muslim India—Attention Diverted to Problem of Hejaz*

On his release in September 1923, Mohamed Ali, who had joined the Indian National Congress only five years back, found himself the President-elect of the national organisation, the highest honour that the nation bestowed only on veterans that had grown grey in its service. At forty-six, Mohamed Ali could be legitimately proud of this distinction.

When Mohamed Ali went to jail in 1921, there was confidence in the air and hope—hope in a resounding victory. Swaraj within a year did not seem too optimistic an assessment. In 1922, Gandhi was arrested soon after he sounded the call to retreat from Bardoli. At the end of 1922, at the Gaya Session of the Congress, Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das led the group who were in favour of constitutional co-operation with Government and recommended

that the Congress contest elections and use its influence to wreck the reforms from within. C. Rajagopalachariar, later the first Indian Governor-General of India, was leader of the no-changers' group. C.R. Das, leader of the pro-changers, presided over the Gaya Session of the Congress, but in the tussle that ensued the no-changers triumphed. When Mohamed Ali came out of prison in 1923, he was President-elect of the Congress—which was sick in mind and body—a house divided. Gandhi was still in jail and he would not pronounce his views on the controversy.

It was left to Mohamed Ali to deal with the situation as best as he could. He was simply amazed at the change. He tried to assess the situation for himself. The United Provinces, a stronghold of the Congress, he found plainly disunited. It was from Allahabad that Motilal Nehru had raised the standard of revolt. He found leaders in the Punjab hopelessly narrow-minded. 'To think that non-cooperators who insisted on lawyers abandoning their practice should now be quarrelling about the percentage of posts alloted by a cooperating Minister (who happened to be Fazl-i-Husain) to Hindus and Muslims!'[1] was not an altogether inspiring prospect.

In 1921, the Muslims had led the first mass movement in India. On the arrest of Mohamed Ali the demonstration of Hindu-Muslim unity was indeed inspiring and unprecedented. Never before or after did Hindus and Muslims sink their differences so completely. Never again were they to share such enthusiasm for a common cause. There seemed for a while no limits which he might not pass. But two years' absence in jail had transformed the scene. On his release in September 1923, Mohamed Ali returned, not to the India of his dreams, but to a country which was torn asunder by inner dissensions, where fear and suspicion had gained an upper hand, where unity was giving way to bitterness, where accord and

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters* (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1958), p. 31 : Mohamed Ali to Jawaharlal Nehru, 7 November 1923.

enthusiasm had cooled down and apprehensions increased.

In Mohamed Ali's own words:

'With our imprisonment the Hindu Mahasabha raised the banner of revolt against Mahatama Gandhi and non-cooperation. Mahatama Gandhi, after having given an ultimatum to the Government adopted an attitude at Bardoli which the country considered as being synonymous with surrender and he too was imprisoned like us. After his imprisonment Pandit Motilal Nehru and Desh Bandhu Das were set free. Instead of resorting to non-cooperation they led a revolt in Gaya under the name of Swaraj which finished off the movement of non-cooperation. On top of it all the Hindu Mahasabha started the movements of *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* which inflamed religious prejudices which we had so successfully cooled down. The Muslims of the Punjab, in retaliation, started *Tabligh* and *Tanzim* and a wordy duel began which proclaimed the bankruptcy of patriotism and nationalism. Thus all the work we had done was undone. . . . This was the story I heard on my release from my second imprisonment.'[2]

Two new Hindu movements started almost immediately after the failure of non-co-peration movement in which 90% of the people who courted arrest were Muslims. Khilafat was the rallying ground although the Punjab wrongs and the slogan of 'Swaraj within a year' were contributory causes of agitation. The dominant note was Khilafat, a Muslim cause, and the overwhelming majority of those that led the movement were Muslims. Orthodox Hinduism reacted by slogans of *Shuddhi* which literally meant purification—purification of India where alien causes were creating such a stir. The programme was to convert all Indians back to their original faith. This, then, was a challenge to the Muslims of India. Having abandoned their original faith, the Hindus thought, they had become such zealous Muslims that they were now seeking to further the cause of Pan-Islam. They must be brought back to the fold of Hinduism and their loyalty contained to the limits of India.

The other movement was known as *Sangathan*, which means unity. Instead of Hindu-Muslim unity being the pervasive passion

2. Abdul Majid Daryabadi, *Diary*, I, 117.

that it was for a while, the idea was to focus attention on unity among the Hindu ranks so that the Muslim danger could be met with vigour and redoubled strength. Hindus were to take physical exercises, learn drill and inculcate in themselves the martial spirit for which Muslims were known and respected at this time. In the process scurrilous attacks on Islam became frequent. Muslims re-acted by organising *Tabligh* (preaching) and *Tanzim* (discipline) and the atmosphere, already bad enough, became worse. Public peace was broken at the slightest provocation on issues like music before mosques and cow-slaughter.

Shuddhi and *Sangathan* were symbols of Hindu revivalism. The movement aimed at reconverting former Hindu converts to Islam and Christianity back to Hinduism. Some 450,000 Muslim Raj-puts were claimed to have been reconverted to Hinduism in 1922-23.[3]

The climate was contaminated by calumnies freely hurled at leaders whose integrity and honesty was so far unquestioned. Khilafat which provided the rallying ground for a mass upheaval against the Britishers was now seen by some Hindus as a betrayal, a trap by Muslims, who had extra-territorial loyalties and could not be trusted as patriots. They were now called upon to establish their credentials as Indians and this they could not do without suddenly shedding their interest in Islam. The militant Hindus set about to establish Hindu Raj in India. Lala Har Dayal, one of their ablest spokesmen, who had founded the *Ghadar* party in the U.S.A., came out with a manifesto of the new movement:

'I declare that the future of the Hindu race, of Hindustan and of the Punjab rests on these four pillars (1) Hindu Sangathan, (2) Hindu Raj, (3) Shuddhi of Muslims, and (4) Conquest and Shuddhi of Afghanistan and the Frontier. So long as the Hindu nation does not accomplish these four things, the safety of our children and the great-grandchildren will be ever in danger, and the safety of the Hindu race will be impossible. The Hindu race has but one history, and its institutions are homogeneous. But the Musalmans and Christians are far removed from the confines of Hinduism.

3. *The Indian Year Book, 1942-43* (Bombay), p. 827.

for their religions are alien and they love Persian, Arab and European institutions. Thus, just as one removes foreign matter from the eye, Shuddhi (conversion) must be made of these two religions. Afghanistan and the hilly regions of the frontier were formerly part of India, but are at present under the domination of Islam. . . . Just as there is Hindu religion in Nepal, so there must be Hindu institutions in Afghanistan and the frontier territory; otherwise it is useless to win Swaraj. If they become our enemies, the age of Nadirshah and Zamanshah will begin anew. At present English officers are protecting the frontiers; but it cannot always be. . . . If Hindus want to protect themselves, they must conquer Afghanistan and the Frontier and convert all the mountain tribes.'[4]

Lala Lajpat Rai, the eminent Hindu Congress leader of the Punjab, was expressing his misgivings about Hindu-Muslim unity to C.R. Das, the eminent leader of Bengal:

'I have devoted most of my time during the last six months to the study of Muslim history and Muslim law and I am inclined to think it [Hindu-Muslim unity] is neither possible nor practicable. Assuming and admitting the sincerity of Mohammedan leaders in the non-cooperation movement, I think their religion provides effective bar to anything of the kind. . . . Can any Muslim leader override the Koran? . . . I am not afraid of the seven crores of Musalmans. But I think the seven crores in Hindustan plus the armed hosts of Afghanistan, Central Asia, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Turkey, will be irresistible.'

In 1923, V.D. Savarkar, who was to found the RSSS two years later, published *Hindustava*, a book which had a deep influence on Hindu nationalists. 'A Hindu means,' he said, 'a person who regards this land of Bharatvarsha, from the Indus to the Seas, as his Fatherland as well as his Holy land, that is, the cradle or land of his religion. Hindustava embraces all the depths of thought and activity of the whole being of our Hindu race.' The Hindus were a nation; the Muslims only a community.[5]

ON his release from jail there was no place Mohamed Ali could call home—his establishment in Delhi had been wound up; the

4. B.R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition of India* (Bombay, 1942), p. 117.

5. *Hindustava* (1942), p. 4.

Nawab of Rampur would not allow him to enter his native State. He, therefore, made straight for Bhowali, a small hill station in U.P., to see his ailing daughter. From there he wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru who was the President of the U.P. Provincial Congress and was not in agreement with his own father about the Swarajist insistence on Council entry.

'Let the Provincial Congress Assembly,' which Mohamed Ali regretted he could not attend, 'send from the sacred soil of Kashi the message of the greater and more solid *Sanghattan* (unity), the *Sanghattan* of the National Congress, which should aim at the union of all down-trodden and oppressed humanity suffering untold torture and humiliation. . . . And let us,' he urged, 'go forth from this Conference truly *Shuddh* (pure), purged of all narrowness, bigotry and intolerance in order to free our motherland from the most cramping slavery.'[6]

In a letter to Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew, one of the General Secretaries of the Congress, on 30 September 1923, Mohamed Ali wrote:

> 'It is not only in the matter of the councils that our Swaraj party friends have parted company with us but they have completely gone back on the entire creed and policy of the Mahatmaji. . . . If horror struck me when I heard of Panditji's [Motilal's] *volte face* . . . in the circumstances we can expect no definite or helpful lead from him. In fact he seems to have pinned too much faith on what Das seems to have brought him to believe would be the result of their council entry. . . . You and I are . . . no appreciators of Gandhi's spirituality. . . . But it is Gandhi, Gandhi, Gandhi, that has got to be dinned into the people's ears because he means Hindu-Muslim unity, non-cooperation, *Swadharma* and *Swaraja*, while the rest are after petty communal or local or foreign ideals, most of them tinged with personal ambitions.'[7]

6. Jawaharlal Nehru, op. cit., p. 29 : Letter by Mohamed Ali undated—1923 from Bhowali.

7. MSS Eur E. 220/7. Hailey Collection. The letter was discovered by A. Langley, I.C.S., Commissioner, Lahore, in his papers and he sent it to Hailey, Governor of the Punjab, on 26 March 1925.

Mohamed Ali found that most of his erstwhile colleagues of the Congress had shed their Gandhism. Jawaharlal Nehru, who strongly disagreed with his own father's ideas of a struggle for independence, was one of the few Hindus he found free from a partisan spirit. He invited him to become the General Secretary of the Congress and share his worries with him in a situation in which, as he told him, 'my position is not improved by my being a Mussalman and a candid one at that.'[8]

Nehru was reluctant to accept the post, partly because of doubts about future policy and partly because of his sensitivity to the apparent opposition within the High Command. But Mohamed Ali persisted, and Nehru yielded. 'I . . . must protest most indignantly once more against your misplaced modesty,' wrote Mohamed Ali to the uncertain Jawaharlal on 15 January 1924. 'My dear Jawahar! It is just because some members of the Working Committee distrust and dislike your presence as Secretary that I like it. . . . So do be cheerful and let us start work.'

'The two men got on very well together, despite Mohamed Ali's "most irrationally religious" attitude, as Nehru termed it in his memoirs of the period. There was a strong bond of mutual affection and trust, and Nehru was drawn to the elder man's dedication, his enthusiasm, his keen intelligence and sharp wit. They clashed on minor points, invariably related to religion. The most noteworthy was Nehru's unilateral instructions to Congress organizations to delete honorary titles in referring to members, such as Pandit meaning "learned man," Maulana [Mohamed Ali himself was one of this select group of Muslim scholars], Mahatma, used only for Gandhi, and others. The President was annoyed at what he considered to be insulting behaviour, and the General Secretary relented.'[9]

8. Jawaharlal Nehru, op. cit., Mohamed Ali to Jawaharlal Nehru, dated 15 June 1924.

9. Michael Brecher, *Nehru, A Political Biography* (London, 1959), pp. 93-94.

For the first time in the history of the Indian National Congress, its President sent fraternal greetings to Japan and other Asian countries, and stressed in his Presidential Address the necessity of India maintaining close and cordial relations with the countries of Asia, a practice that was followed by the Congress for many years to come.

Speaking about Hindu-Muslim tension, as President of the National Congress at Cocanada, Mohamed Ali said :

'It seems to me that we in the North suffer from a mental myopia, and as we move forward our sufferings are left behind, and gradually recede into obscurity, so that even at a very short distance of time the troubles of to-day blot out all recollection of the terrors of yesterday. And what is worse, each community remembers only that which it has itself suffered, retaining in its memory no record of the sufferings it had itself caused to others.'[10]

About *Sanghatan* he said : 'This is entirely an affair of my Hindu brethren . . . if the Sanghatan is organised to remove untouchability and to provide for the speedy assimilation of the Antyaj [untouchables] and their complete absorption into Hindu society, I must rejoice at it both as a Muslim and as a Congressman.' But he warned : 'A broken limb which has just come out of a steel frame should not be too severely strained. . . . [The] people are busy creating the suspicion that the removal of untouchability is not intended to result in the absorption of the suppressed classes into Hindu society, but merely to use them as auxiliaries on the Hindu side in future affrays. . . . Friends,' he appealed, 'let us befriend the suppressed classes for their own injured sakes and not for the sake of injuring others or even avenging our own injuries.'[11]

On *Shuddhi* or conversion Mohamed Ali said that all religions were at perfect liberty to preach their gospel. His complaint was that Hinduism was not a missionary religion. Both communities must be free to preach as well as practise the tenets of their

10. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 302. 11. Ibid., pp. 305-06.

respective faiths. 'I hope the age of the Spanish Inquisition has gone for ever, and no one would think of abolishing heresy by wiping out the heretic. . . . My own belief is,' he said, 'that both sides are working with an eye much more on the next decennial Census than on heaven itself, and I frankly confess it is on such occasions that I sigh for the days when our forefathers settled things by cutting heads rather than counting them.'[12]

'Hindu-Muslim unity is vital,' said Mohamed Ali, 'and, in fact, the most vital that we have to settle, but the issues which disturb that unity are contemptibly petty.' In 1904, in criticising the education given in the Indian Universities Mohamed Ali had said, 'the greater portion of bigotry agitates not the bosoms of the ignorant and the illiterate but excites to fury and to madness the little-learned of the land.'

This seemed to be true twenty years later when communal disturbances were being caused by Hindus playing music before mosques, and Muslims eating beef which meant the killing of sacred cows.

Mutual trust had given way to deep distrust. The bond between Hindus and Muslims, which expressed itself with such overpowering beauty in 1921, was now leading to ugly paths. Mohamed Ali came out of jail only to see that he had come out of the fire into the frying pan. He was not only to face a grave domestic affliction, he could not long afford to remain by the bedside of his dying daughter; he needed all the faith and courage to face the crisis of confidence.

The gulf between Hindus and Muslims was growing. Unscrupulous elements were leaving no stone unturned to inflame passions and the press was thriving on sensationalism. It got an opportunity of a lifetime to malign and misrepresent Mohamed Ali who made a speech at Lucknow towards the end of 1923, a time when some Muslims were already accusing him of being a Gandhi-worshipper. The story is best told in the words of Mohamed Ali:[13]

12. Ibid., pp. 308-09.

13. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XXIII, 567-68, Appendix XIII.

'The real object of these gentlemen was to alienate me from the Mussalman community, the Khilafat Committee and the Congress, by representing that I had become a follower of Mahatma Gandhi in my religious principles. I had, therefore, on several occasions plainly declared that in the matter of religion, I professed the same belief as any other true Mussalman, and as such I claimed to be a follower of the Prophet Mahomed (on him be peace) and not of Gandhiji. And further that since I hold Islam to be the highest gift of God, therefore, I was impelled by the love I bear towards Mahatmaji to pray to God that He might illumine his soul with the true light of Islam. I wish, however, to emphatically declare that I hold that today neither the representatives of Islam nor of the Hindu, Jewish, Nazarene or Parsi faith can present another instance of such high character and moral worth as Gandhiji and that is the reason why I hold him in such high reverence and affection. I deeply revere my own mother, and if contentment and gratefulness under all circumstances be the true meaning of Islam, I claim there is no person, howsowever well versed in religion, who has understood it better than she. Similarly, I regard Maulana Abdul Bari as my religious guide. His loving kindness holds me in bondage. I deeply admire his sincerity of heart. But in spite of all this, I make bold to say that I have not yet found any person who in actual character is entitled to a higher place than Mahatma Gandhi.

'But between belief and actual character there is a wide difference. As a follower of Islam I am bound to regard the creed of Islam as superior to that professed by the followers of any non-Islamic religion. And in this sense the creed of even a fallen and degraded Mussalman is entitled to a higher place than that of any other non-Muslim irrespective of his high character, even though the person in question be Mahatma Gandhi himself.

'At Lucknow, when just before the commencement of my speech, someone placed a printed copy of the question in reference in my hand for reply (copies of which had also been freely distributed among the audience) I had stated that I did not want to answer any such questions, as I did not consider that anyone, unless he could prove that he bore a greater affection towards Mahatmaji than I did, was entitled to charge me with having reviled him. It was only when I was told that the point at issue was not that I had reviled Mahatmaji, but that I had reviled the Hindu religion, that I gave the above-stated reply. A report of my speech had appeared in the *Hamdam* at that time, i.e. about one month back. I had said further therein that every Christian believed that a Christian, however degraded or fallen, was entitled to a higher place in regard to the matter of belief as contra-distinguished from actual character than any Mussalman or Jew, irrespective of his

high character and the same was the case with Hindus or followers of any other religion. My reply proved so satifactory that, a Hindu friend shouted out that 22 crores of Hindus were prepared to stand by me and several Hindu members of the audience acclaimed it with cries of Bande Mataram, Allah-o-Akbar, while the persons who had brought the printed copies of the question were completely silenced.'

Mohamed Ali at this time was President-elect of the National Congress. There was an uproar in the Hindu press which clamoured for his resignation. If Mohamed Ali with all his services and personal devotion to Gandhi could not be trusted, then it was plain that the Hindus would 'not find a single Musalman who will completely satisfy them.'[14]

The Hindu press accused Mohamed Ali of reviling Gandhi and saying that he considered him inferior to an adulterous Muslim. This is how Gandhi wrote of this incident on his release from jail in 1924: 'The Muslims have charged the Maulana with having become a flatterer or worshipper of Gandhi. To worship Gandhi is to deify Gandhi, that is, to believe that there is nothing higher than Gandhi in this world. This amounts to professing Gandhi's religion, and that was the charge against the Maulana. . . . The Maulana, who was asked in a meeting at Lucknow a question gave this reply: "I consider the religious principles of an adulterous Muslim to be better than Gandhi's religious principles." Here the Maulana,' explained Gandhi, 'has not instituted a comparison between "Mahatma" Gandhi and an adulterous Muslim, but only between their religious principles.'

Gandhi wrote that Hindu newspapers had given a distorted report of the speech and that the Maulana 'has proved the purity of his heart and his faith in his own religion by expressing his view.' Holding that molehill was made into a mountain, Gandhi concluded that all that Mohamed Ali had said 'comes to this, that to everyone his own religion appears good. Which Hindu can

14. Mohamed Ali in a letter to Swami Shardhanand (*Young India*, 10 April 1924).

controvert that statement?' asked Gandhi.[15]

Gandhi was released from prison in February 1924. He had been out of touch with the mood of the country for nearly two years which had changed the scene out of all recognition. Mohamed Ali went to brief him and so did others, notably Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who was emerging as the powerful leader of Hindu Mahasabha. Mohamed Ali had grave misgivings about him and he expressed them freely in a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru:

> 'I do not know whether my conversations with Bapu at Juhu have had any effect at all in the matter of the Hindu-Muslim tension. Perhaps he would have heard next to nothing about the Muslim side of it if I had not told him what I had heard because I do not think many Mussalmans had corresponded with him. Since I could not speak with personal knowledge all that my conversations could do was to suggest to him that there is a Muslim side too. In one respect, however, I am positive that I failed to impress him at all and that is the character of his "worshipful brother," Pandat Madan Mohan Malaviya. He comes out of it the best of us all! And yet both Shaukat and I were under the impression that Bapu thought very differently of the noble Pandit. If Bapu believes all that he says about him—and there can be little doubt of it—then I must despair of the near future at any rate. I had discussed the matter frankly with your father and he told me that he largely agreed with me that Malaviyaji was out to defeat Gandhism and to become the leader of the Hindus only since he could not be the leader of Muslims as well as Hindus, and that Hindu-Muslim unity was not his ideal. My dear Jawahar, God knows that the Mussalmans too have their Malaviyas and there is no love lost between them and me.'[16]

Sir Muhammad Shafi records in his unpublished Diary an interview lasting three hours with the Ali Brothers and Maulana Abdul Bari on 17 February 1924. 'I spoke frankly to them,' wrote Sir Shafi, 'about the past, present and future and told them something about what Lord Reading had done during the Turkish crisis and emphasised the danger to Islam in India because of *Shuddi*

15. *Navajivan*, 13 April 1924 (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XXIII, 428-32, an article entitled 'Charge against Mohamed Ali').

16. Mohamed Ali to J. Nehru, dated 15 June 1924 (Jawaharlal Nehru, op. cit.).

and *Sanghatan* movements. They also spoke quite frankly and admitted the need of organising the Muslim community. . . . I pointed out changes in British policy since Lloyd George had gone out and that appeared to impress them. "Tell Lord Reading from us," they said, "that it is Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya, who are the real enemies of the British and of Islam in the country and not Gandhi." They promised me that they would not oppose the organising of the Muslim community for the purpose of defending and promoting Muslim interests in India.'[17]

Mohamed Ali's misgivings about Hindu leaders were not misfounded because in his first public pronouncement after his release on inter-communal relations Gandhi said, 'There is no doubt in my mind that in the majority of quarrels the Hindus came out the second best. My own experience but confirms the opinion that the Mussulman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu a coward. Where there are cowards there will always be bullies.'[18]

A whole community had been censured. The President of the National Congress was not even consulted before the issue of such a significant statement. Mohamed Ali felt deeply hurt. He wrote several articles supporting his dissent with facts which spoke for themselves. But the Mahatma had spoken and the 'bully' and the 'coward' were picturesque adjectives that stuck and acquired the force of an invincible argument in which the Muslims found themselves at the receiving end of the tyranny of phrases so forcefully used by a man who carefully chose every word he used.

Mohamed Ali received some consolation in Gandhi's opposition to a programme of Council entry but here again the little support he received was mitigated by Gandhi's personal praise of the Swarajists. 'My conscience is in the keeping of the Swarajists,' he said, 'and I shall cling to them as a child clings to his mother.'[19]

Gandhi had come to the conclusion that Hindu-Muslim relations had deteriorated to an extent where it was not possible to

17. Shafi's 'Diary,' 17 February 1924.
18. *The Indian Quarterly Register*, 1924, Vol. I., No. 2, p. 647.
19. Bose, *The Indian Struggle* (London, Wishart & Co., 1935), p. 121.

make any significant contribution. He shifted the emphasis from Hindu-Muslim unity, which was once the *sine qua non* of India's independence, to *Khaddar* and the spinning wheel. A change was made, at his initiative, in the constitution of the Congress in 1924 making spinning compulsory for members. A quantity of self-spun yarn was to replace the payment in cash of membership fee. The Swarajists opposed the change with the result that both alternatives were retained for membership. Mohamed Ali, a disciplined soldier took to spinning. The Big Brother made a mighty effort but succeeded in sending only one tola of indifferently-spun yarn. Mohamed Ali did better. This is what he had to tell Gandhi:

'I send with Shaukat the poor attempt of the President of the Congress at spinning. The history of my spinning is this. Never had I spun a yard of yarn in all my life, but after Ahmedabad I was determined to commence it the moment I settled down at Delhi. Continuous travelling was followed by illness, but on the 2nd August I sat down at long last to spin. Two skeins of thick, uneven, horrible yarn are the result of the work done on the 2nd and 3rd. But some of it was spun by my wife who acted as my tutor and afterwards also by Arif Hasvi who also taught me a little. On the 4th I spun the third skein but forgot to count the yards spun. I think it was about 110 yards. On the 5th, 6th and 7th I did about 300 yards and then had to go to Rampur to see mother, and I greatly regret that the *charkha* was left behind in my hurried and worried departure. On my return I did another 150 yards or so, but have been kept busy by the Hindu-Muslim negotiations. Mother's illness and my own foot on which one carbuncle has not yet healed and another has made its appearance. The last (4th skein) is 462 yards and represents about 4 days' work. I promise you that God willing I will not only spin 2000 yards by the 15th September but will also make up the defficiency for August. Will you, in the meantime, accept the will for the deed?'[20]

Mohamed Ali had by this time settled down in Delhi in his old house in Kucha Chelan. Both the *Hamdard* and the *Comrade* had been revived. *Comrade* came out on 31 October and *Hamdard* on 8 November 1924.

Presidentship of the Indian National Congress was enough to

20. *Collected Works of M. Gandhi*, XXV, 15.

keep any man busy. And Mohamed Ali was the proprietor, editor and printer of two newspapers. He toured the country addressing meetings, campaigning for membership of the Congress, composing differences between Hindus and Muslims. And no matter where he was he wrote for his papers which used to carry his message to the people. And what was the message? 'The *Comrade* and the *Hamdard* have been resuscitated,' wrote Gandhi, 'to tell the Hindus and the Mussalmans that the only condition on which unity and freedom are possible is mutual toleration amongst all who call themselves Indians, be they Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis, Jews or what not. In reviving his papers, *Comrade* and *Hamdard*, Maulana Mohamed Ali is certainly taking upon his shoulders a great responsibility. But he is a Godfearing man, his trust is in God and God makes clear what to us may be impenetrable darkness. I, therefore, add prayer to his own that his mission may be blessed with success, that he may always have the right word for all, friend and foe, that he and his assistants may write nothing in anger or haste and that every word in *Comrade* and *Hamdard* may be a power for the good of our country and through it of humanity and that his papers may be the promoters of peace and good-will among the people in this land professing different faiths.'

'I have lost no occasion,' wrote Gandhi, 'for advertising friendship of heart that exists between the Ali Brothers and myself. They claim to be, as they are, pucka Mussalmans and I claim to be a pucka Hindu. That fact has proved no bar to the real affection and perfect trust between us, and if it is possible for such friendship to exist between some Mussalmans and some Hindus, we may deduce by a simple rule of arithmetic that it must be equally possible for millions of Hindus and millions of Mussalmans if only they will it. This friendship the *Comrade* and the *Hamdard* will, I am confident, seek to promote in every way and chiefly by presenting what is best and noblest in Islam. May God grant

them speedy success and grant it in full measure.'[21]

Mohamed Ali was trying to do too much. Friends suggested that one paper was bad enough but he insisted on editing both. Shaukat Ali tried to lay down the law but Mohamed Ali resisted. He was virtually working day and night. Even ordinarily he never observed any fixed hours but now, in the midst of the crisis around him, he threw himself headlong into work. He was working madly when he was swimming with the tide. Now he had to exert himself more when he was swimming against it. Mohamed Ali certainly did not spare himself. His lack of method added to his difficulties. The strain and stress of public work are not altogether consistent with the calm and quiet required of the editorial sanctum but somehow Mohamed Ali muddled through in his own inimitable manner.

In September 1924, Gandhi came to stay with the President of the Indian National Congress. Mohamed Ali's home was his office. He placed the whole of it at the disposal of Gandhi who had a considerable entourage. Gandhi was a vegetarian and Mohamed Ali loved eating good food. Even though Gandhi never shared a meal with anyone and ate on his own, the whole household went vegetarain. This was quite a trial for the family and friends but the laws of hospitality demanded this sacrifice.

During Gandhi's stay with Mohamed Ali a serious communal riot broke out in Kohat. Mohamed Ali was discussing this matter at the house of Dr Ansari when he was informed that Gandhi had decided suddenly to go on a twenty-one-day fast. He rushed back home and discovered that he could not discuss the matter with Gandhi for it was his day of silence. Gandhi scribbled on a piece of paper that the light had come like a flash and that he had decided to undertake a purificatory fast of twenty-one days for he felt that the responsibility for the riots rested on him. 'Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people?' he argued; 'I must find the remedy if the energy proved

21. Ibid., XXV, 279 (reproduced from *Hindi Navajivan*, 2 April 1924).

self-destructive.'[22]

Mohamed Ali was candid in his criticism. He charged Gandhi with breach of faith towards his co-workers and gave free utterance to all the bitterness he felt. Were he to succumb to the rigours of the twenty-one-day fast, the first Gandhi was undertaking, the Hindu community would wreak vengeance on Muslims. How would it help advance amity, and accord?—asked Mohamed Ali. Gandhi merely smiled and scribbled again : 'You are entitled to say all you have said and much more. As soon as you have composed yourself, I shall talk to you the whole night. Only remember that there are things in which there is no interposition between God and Man.'[23]

Mohamed Ali's mother was seriously ill at this time. From her death-bed she sent a message to Gandhi who replied that if he had the power to obey his own real mother in the matter he would have carried out Bi Amman's command. This was, however, a matter between God and himself. Having failed to dissuade him Mohamed Ali remonstrated that Gandhi was belying his public posture that he relied completely on Shaukat Ali. In this case he had not even cared to consult him. Shaukat Ali arrived three days later from Bombay.

Mohamed Ali had built much on his coming, for he had fondly hoped that he would probably shake Gandhi's resolve. Indeed, Gandhi had promised him that he would give up the vow if Shaukat or he convinced him that the fast was morally or in any other way wrong. The long talk with Shaukat was, however, of no avail, as far as the continuance of the fast was concerned.

A pure and simple soul, Mohamed Ali quoted the following verse from the Quran to Ghandi in order to persuade him to give up his vow which he candidly told him was frivolous and thoughtless :

'God will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts and He is Oft-Forgiv-

22. Ibid., XXV, 200.

23. Ibid., XXV, 156.

ing, Most Forbearing.'[24]

Gandhi remained unmoved.

On 25 September, eight days after starting the fast, he wrote: 'But was it right for me to go through the fast under a Mussalman roof? Yes, it was. . . . It is in the fitness of things that this fast should be taken up and completed in a Mussalman house. And who is Mohamed Ali?' he asked. Only two days before the fast, he confided, 'We had discussion about a private matter in which I told him, what was mine was his and what was his was mine. . . . I have never received warmer or better treatment than under Mohamed Ali's roof. Every want of mine is anticipated. The dominant thought of every one of his household is to make me and mine happy and comfortable.'[25]

The fast ended on 8 October 1924, when Mohamed Ali presented Gandhi with a cow which he purchased from a butcher so that he might send it to a pinjrapole—a cow-house. Gandhi was deeply touched. 'My dear brother,' he wrote, 'you are more than a brother to me. I have seen the cow. My bed was lifted to enable me to see her. What love that has prompted the act! May the bond between you twins and me fructify into an indissoluble bond between Hindus and Mussalmans. . . . Yes, God is Great. He can work wonders.'[26]

Bi Amman, Mohamed Ali's mother, passed away in the middle of November at the age of eighty-one years. She was a great lady. A staunch Muslim, she did not miss a single prayer for fifty years. She had unbounded love for Islam and India. Though old in years she possessed the energy of youth. She travelled ceaselessly in the cause of Khilafat and Swaraj. She had taken to *Khaddar* and her stately figure had become a familiar part of public gatherings. Having heard that life was ebbing away in her, Gandhi hurried to her bedside. Describing the scene he wrote in *Young India*:

24. ii. 225 (A. Yusuf Ali's translation).
25. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XXV, 201.
26. Ibid., XXV, 181 (8 October 1924).

'I heard no sobbing, though I noticed tears trickling down Maulana Mohamed Ali's cheeks. The Big Brother restrained himself with difficulty, though there was an unusual solemnity about his face. They were all chanting the name of Allah. One friend was reciting the last prayers. The *Comrade* press was situated within earshot of Bi Amma's bedroom. But the work was not interrupted for a single moment. Nor did the Maulana interrupt his own editorial duties. Indeed no essential public duty was suspended.'[27]

Bi Amman's word was law to Mohamed Ali. In 'Mother,' the article that he wrote in three instalments in *Comrade*, Mohamed Ali said that the credit for whatever he was, was completely hers. For forty-six years she had been the most loving mother, an inspiring friend, a resolute supporter in every cause, a co-sufferer in exile and a living example of courage, love and sacrifice. A great pillar of strength had fallen.

At the end of the year 1924 Mohamed Ali laid down his office of the Presidentship of the National Congress. He went to Belgaum in Bombay to hand over his responsibility to Gandhi who was the next President. An old patient of diabetes, Mohamed Ali was burning the candle at both ends—his day was packed with activity and he worked long into the night writing most of the articles in the *Comrade*. And this happened every day of the week. The spirit was strong and dauntless but the flesh was prematurely growing weak, for Mohamed Ali was only forty-six years old at this time.

In September 1923, when Mohamed Ali was released from jail, Mustafa Kemal appointed a special committee of his newly-established People's Party to draft a Constitution. The discussion dragged on for over a month in the National Assembly. The eldest member of the House, Abdurrahman Seref, the last official historian of the Ottoman Empire, said, 'One hundred years of the Turkish transformation is giving birth to a child. Are we afraid to spell his name? Let us face it: this is Republic!'[28]

27. Ibid., XXV, 332.

28. Niyazi Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey* (1964,) p. 456.

A torrent of speeches choked the objections and protests of the Khilafatists in the Assembly and the Constitution was passed at midnight on 29 October 1923. Under the new Constitution Mustafa Kemal was elected President of a republic that was an Islamic State, for Article 2 of the Constitution declared that 'the religion of the Turkish State is Islam'. This was some consolation for the sagging spirit of Indian Muslims who looked upon Mustafa Kemal as the saviour of Islam. His pictures—a general riding a white horse—were to be seen all over the country; the image of a warrior who had defeated an enemy and would rescue Islam from its abject slavery. The Indian Muslims were in for a rude awakening.

Mustafa Kemal might have tolerated the Caliphate if his concept of it as a harmless spiritual institution had been accepted. But the protagonists of Khilafat looked upon it as a link between Turkey and the Islamic world; and a delusion that the Khalifah was the Ruler of all Believers was sedulously fostered and encouraged by those close to the Caliph. He continued to follow the court ceremony; members of the dynasty continued to occupy the palaces; he received delegates, sent messages to Muslims in foreign countries. A Muslim Pope was in the process of becoming!

Two incidents among others clinched the issue. The Caliph complained of the inadequacy of his treasury and demanded an increased subvention from the State. 'What is the Caliphate Treasury?' Kemal asked. 'The Caliph does not and should not have a Treasury.' 'For a Caliph,' he said, 'no pomp and luxury, but a simple and modest life, just like human beings, is appropriate.' He ordered the dismissal of the courtiers, secretaries, councillors and the rest.[29]

The second incident was the gift of the Indian Muslims. On 24 November 1923, the Aga Khan and Ameer Ali, in a long letter to the Turkish Government, urged 'the imminent necessity for

29. *Nutuk* (English translation), p. 682.

maintaining the religious and moral solidarity of Islam by placing the Caliph-Imamate on a basis which would command the confidence and esteem of the Muslim nations.'[30]

Copies of the letter were sent to the Turkish newspapers which were already debating the issue. Both the authors were believed to have been active participants in the campaign against the Caliph's declaration of holy war during World War I and now they were seeking for him an authority which they were themselves accused of defying in the interest of the British Empire.[31]

Mustafa Kemal now openly expressed his views. After explaining the nature of the Caliphate he said:

> 'It is easy to understand that the real intention of those who claimed that the substance of the Caliphate is temporal power was to make the people believe that the Caliphate is State and the Caliph the head of the State and, hence, in reality, the Caliph should be the head of the Turkish State. . . . I explained to the nation that for the sake of the utopia of establishing a world-wide Islamic State, the Turkish State and its handful of people cannot be subjugated to the service of a Caliph. . . . We must put an end from now on to the delusion of imagining ourselves the masters of the world. Enough of the calamities to which we have dragged the nation by our ignorance of the conditions of the world and our real position in it and by our following the fools!'

The bill abolishing the Caliphate was passed on 3 March 1924. Eight days later on 11 March, Mohamed Ali's favourite daughter died. It was a month of mourning. Wrote Mohamed Ali to a friend, 'The national calamities have swallowed my personal afflictions like the staff of Moses swallowed the snakes of the sorcerers.'[32]

Shaukat Ali, Mohamed Ali's Big Brother, fell seriously ill in April. There was no rest for a weary soul. With the abolition of Khilafat came the most stunning blow to a man who had espoused this cause with such passion and conviction. His life's mission was now in shambles, the dream had been shattered. 'But for

30. Full text in Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs*, p. 571.
31. W. C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India* (London, 1946), p. 206.
32. Abdul Majid Daryabadi, op. cit., I, 149.

God's Grace,' he confided to an old friend, 'I do not know where my (present) state of mind will lead me and what I may do in such a situation.'[33]

Mohamed Ali, in an interview to a press representative, said that the Turkish Government had thrown away a great weapon which the Khilafat had provided to Turks. But he added that Khilafat was not a weapon of offence in the hands of Islam, but only a sure shield for purposes of defence against European aggression. He did not accept that it was the personal ambition of Mustafa Kemal that had led him to get rid of the Caliph. Now that the Khilafat had gone into the melting pot, even if the ideal Khilafat was not realised today a much more reformed Khilafat than what had existed in recent years in Turkey could certainly be realised, and if Mustafa Kemal desired to become Khalifah, not only for the Turkish nation, but for the whole Islamic world, while remaining as the head of the Republic in Turkey, Mohamed Ali, for one, would not vote against the arrangement.

The Khilafat was dead like his daughter. His daughter he buried but he carried the corpse of Khilafat over his shoulders. On 23 June 1924, the matter came up before a meeting of the Working Committee of the Khilafat Conference in Delhi. Besides Mohamed Ali those present were Shaukat Ali, Ajmal Khan, A.K. Azad, Abdul Qadir, Dr Ansari, Abdul Majid, T.A.K. Sherwani, Zahur Ahmad, Shuaib Qureshi and Muhammed Shafi. The Minutes recorded by Syed Tasadduq Husain on 1 July 1924, and preserved in the Lucknow Secretariat Archives, are a sad commentary on the confusion caused in the Muslim ranks by this calamity which was by no means sudden. The lack of realism and the persistence of wishful thinking is indeed incredible. Here are some extracts:

'Shaukat Ali said his personal view was that the Turks' action in deposing Khalifa and abolishing Khilaftat was a gross breach of religious injunctions. . . . Turks ought to be asked to restore Sultan Abdul Majid . . . he may be invested with full powers in

33. Ibid.

religious matters. . . .

'Mohmed Ali said Mustapha Kemal "was *la mazhab* (irreligious) and a traitor to the cause."

'All this outburst of Ali Brothers was greatly resented and disapproved by 9 other members. A.K. Azad, Shuaib and Abdul Kadir opposed the Brothers' suggestion to restore Khilafat.'

The Working Committee decided that no resolution should be passed.

Muslim India was stunned and shocked at the news that Mustafa Kemal had abolished Khilafat. The reaction was one of horror and deep dismay. A conservative Muslim like Sir Muhammed Shafi, a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, had the following to say in his 'Diary' for 5 March 1924 :

'Turkish National Assembly have abolished Khilafat and deposed Khalifa. Within 24 hours of the Act being passed in Assembly, the Vali of Constantinople with Military Officers went to Caliph's palace, took him to the Throne room and ordered to ascend and then descend. With his two wives and son he was then taken to Sebataldja, put in a special train and sent to Switzerland. The decree banishes all members of the House of Osman, male and female, from Turkey. The Act also abolishes Ministry of Wakfs and all Theological schools have been closed! Suicidal step on the part of Turkey and great blow to the solidarity of Islam. Either Mustafa Kemal Pasha is following in the footsteps of Napolean Bonaparte or Turkey has gone the why of Russia. Ismet Pasha in a speech declared that Turkey will not tolerate interference by any country, Muslim or otherwise. According to him Muslim nations supported Turkey not because of Khilafat but of Turkish strength. This is absolute nonsense. Truly Indian Mussalmans have been let down by the Turks.'

Iqbal alone, among the contemporary Muslim leaders of India, was able to perceive the change in its true perspective. He alone saw a silver lining in the cloud. For him the abolition of Khilafat was no disaster, and no mourning seemed to be called for. It was, on the contrary, an act of *Ijtihad*, an evidence of vision and imagination on the part of Muslim Turkey which was setting a dynamic example of creative interpretation of the laws of Islam to the Muslim world.

This is how Iqbal interpreted the decision of Grand National Assembly:

'Let us now see how the Grand National Assembly has exercised this power of Ijtihad in regard to the institution of Khilafat. According to Sunni Law the appointment of an Imam or Khalifa is absolutely indispensable. The first question that arises in this connexion is this—Should the Caliphate be vested in a single person? Turkey's Ijtihad is that according to the spirit of Islam the Caliphate or Imamate can be vested in a body of persons, or an elected Assembly. The religious doctors of Islam in Egypt and India, so far as I know, have not yet expressed themselves on this point. Personally, I believe that Turkish view is perfectly sound. It is hardly necessary to argue this point. The republican form of government is not only thoroughly consistent with the spirit of Islam, but has also become a necessity in view of the new forces that are set free in the world of Islam. . . .

'. . . The Turks argue that in our political thinking we must be guided by our past political experience which points unmistakably to the fact that the idea of Universal Imamate has failed in practice. It was a workable idea when the Empire of Islam was intact. Since the break-up of this Empire independent political units have arisen. The idea has ceased to be operative and cannot work as a living factor in the organization of modern Islam. Far from serving any useful purpose it has really stood in the way of a reunion of Independent Mulsim States. Persia has stood aloof from the Turks in view of her doctrinal differences regarding the Khilafat; Morocco has always looked askance at them, and Arabia has cherished private ambition. And all these ruptures in Islam for the sake of a mere symbol of a power which departed long ago. Why should we not, he can further argue, learn from experience in our political thinking? Din not Qazi Abu Bakr Baqilani drop the condition of Qarshiyat in the Khalifa in view of the facts of experience, *i.e.*, the political fall of the Qureish and their consequent inability to rule the world of Islam? Centuries ago Ibn-i-Khaldun, who personally believed in the condition of Qarshiyat in the Khalifa, argued much in the same way. Since the power of the Qureish, he says, has gone, there is no alternative but to accept the most powerful man as Imam in the country where he happens to be powerful. Thus Ibn-i-Khaldun, realizing the hard logic of facts, suggests a view which may be regarded as the first dim vision of an International Islam fairly in sight to-day. Such is the attitude of the modern Turk, inspired as he is by the realities of experience, and not by the scholastic reasoning of jurists who lived and thought under

different conditions of life. . . .

'The truth is that among the Muslim nations of to-day Turkey alone has shaken off its dogmatic slumber, and attained to self-consciousness. She alone has claimed her right of intellectual freedom ; she alone has passed from the ideal to the real—a transition which entails keen intellectual and moral struggle. To her the growing complexities of a mobile and broadening life are sure to bring new situations suggesting new points of view, and necessitating fresh interpretations of principles which are only of an academic interest to a people who have never experienced the joy of spiritual expansion. It is, I think, the English thinker Hobbes who makes this acute observation that to have a succession of identical thoughts and feelings is have no thoughts and feelings at all. Such is the lot of most Muslim countries to-day. They are mechanically repeating old values, whereas the Turk is on the way to creating new values. He has passed through great experiences which have revealed his deeper self to him. In him life has begun to move, change, and amplify, giving birth to new desires, bringing new difficulties and suggesting new interpretations. The question which confronts him to-day, and which is likely to confront other Muslim countries in the near future is whether the Law of Islam is capable of evolution—a question which will require great intellectual effort, and is sure to be answered in the affirmative, provided the world of Islam approaches it in the spirit of Omar—the first critical and independent mind in Islam who, at the last moments of the Prophet, had the moral courage to utter these remarkable words: "The Book of God is sufficient for us." '[34]

Muslim India was clearly at bay. The Ulema who had provided the Khilafat Movement with religious support were no longer necessary because the movement had collapsed. They now turned against Mohamed Ali, the President of the Indian National Congress. In his lengthy Presidential Address to the Congress in Cocanada he did not even mention Mustafa Kemal's name:

'All that the Treaty of Lausanne has done [he said] is to declare that the Turks have not lost their Swaraj. . . . The Khilafat Committee's demands and, in particular the religious requirements with regard to the Jazirat-ul-Arab, still remain unsatisfied.'[35]

34. Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore, 1968), pp. 157-62.

35. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 290.

'Victory has not been snatched from the jaws of defeat and despair by the valiant and God-fearing Turks to no purpose, and I feel confident that once they are free from the distractions inevitable after the victories both of war and peace they will revive with God's assistance the glories not of Omayyad or Abbasid Empire, but of the first thirty years of Khilafat before there were any kings or dynasts.'[36]

'. . . The Holy land of Islam remains in the custody of non-Muslim mandatories. Five times a day every Muslim who offers his daily prayers with regularity turns his face towards the Ka'ba. While I was still in Bijapur gaol a question occurred to me which I put into verse, and it still remains unanswered:

اُس کا کعبہ جس کی جانب روز پڑھتے تھے نماز
کیا کہیں گے اُس سے کیونکر قبضہٗ دشمن میں تھا

(His Ka'ba facing which we were daily offering prayers, what shall we say to Him how it was left under the enemy's control?).'[37]

This, then, was the cause which was the central point of the Khilafat programme, which was now to engage Mohamed Ali's attention. In the land of Hejaz is the Ka'bah in Mecca, the first house of God. There too lies in Medina the last of the Prophets in peace. The Muslim interest in the independence and integrity of Hejaz is manifest.

The British had broken the Turkish Empire and the Arab Provinces had been promised independence in reward for their co-operation with the British. In Hejaz, Sharif Husain had been installed. He had pretensions to Khilafat, but how can such a person, people argued, who depends for his existence on British subsidies, claim to be the Caliph of all Muslim believers in the world? When Ibn Saud, the Amir of Najd, started hostilities against the Sharif, the Indian Muslims hailed his advent as that of a saviour who would deliver Muslims from the ruler of Hejaz. Mohamed Ali thought this was a God-sent opportunity to rid the land of kings and establish in Hejaz a Caliphate reminiscent of the days of the Prophet, a Caliphate which was accountable to the Muslim world which would elect a Khalifah in accordance

36. Ibid., p. 313.

37. Ibid., pp. 315-16.

with the Shariat of Islam. Ibn Saud encouraged such hopes and affirmed in many messages and telegrams to the Khilafat leaders that his only aim was to rid the Hejaz of the curse and tyranny of Sharif Husain and that he had no territorial ambitions. A delegation was sent to the Hejaz at the end of the year but it did not get beyond Jeddah owing to the hostilities which had then commenced between the Government of the Hejaz and Ibn Saud, Amir of Najd. It delivered the following statement of the aims of the Indian Khilafat Committee to the Government of Hejaz:

> (1) To set up a lawful (i.e. in accordance with Shariat Law) republican government in the Hejaz which shall be independent internally and whose foreign policy shall be such as to satisfy the Muslim world and meet its views in regard to the complete and absolute independence of the country—an independence free from foreign influence, whether open or concealed.
>
> (2) To call a Muslim Conference for the formation of this republic, in which there shall participate delegates from admittedly independent-minded Muslim societies in Muslim lands which are under domination, and representatives of the independent Muslim Governments, and delegates of the Hejaz.
>
> (3) Neither the Sharif nor his family were to have any connection whatsoever with this assembly or in any matter affecting the centralisation of the Hejaz.[38]

38. D.I.B. Report, p. 209.

Chapter Twelve

DRIFTS, DOUBTS AND DIVISIONS [1925–1926]

Drifting Away from the Congress—Gandhi's Counsel of Despair—Stand on Apostasy—Differences with Lajpat Rai and His School of Thought—Formula to Bridge Hindu-Muslim Differences—An Undelivered Letter—A Witty Analysis of the Situation—The Battle of the Domes—The Controversy Sparked off by Ibn Saudi's Iconoclastic Zeal—Mohamed Ali Supports Ibn Saud and Courts Unpopularity among Muslims—Breach with Maulana Abdul Bari—Muslims' Co-operation with Hindus on the Constitutional Front—Success of Hindu Mahasabha in Elections of 1926 and the Consequences—Pilgrimage to Mecca and Disillusionment with Ibn Saud's Policy

FOR the first time in his life as President of the Indian National Congress, Mohamed Ali had an opportunity of working closely with the top leadership which was almost entirely Hindu. The more he got to know them, the less he seemed to trust them. Malaviya and Lajpat Rai were frankly and forcefully pleading for an aggressive revival of Hinduism; the others who were equivocal and ambivalent in their public utterances were privately pledging them support. There was a clear crisis of confidence. Gandhi alone inspired respect and, despite his branding the Muslim community as a bully, Mohamed Ali reposed complete trust in his political leadership. The only other Hindus he considered above partisan prejudices were Jawaharlal Nehru in the north and Srinavasa Iyengar in the south of India.[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru has pointed out that after his year of Congress Presidentship 'Mohamed Ali gradually drifted away from

1. Abdul Majid Daryabadi, *Personal Diary*, I, 155.

the Congress. . . . The process was slow. . . . But the rift widened, estrangement grew.' [2]

In 1924, Gandhi had undertaken to investigate jointly with Shaukat Ali the causes leading to the Kohat riots which arose out of the publication of an anti-Islamic poem of Hindu authorship. Gandhi and Shaukat Ali came to divergent conclusions. The atmosphere of mutual distrust had permeated the highest ranks. A public admission of differences between Shaukat Ali and Gandhi could not but increase distrust between the two communities. The profession of Gandhi that his differences with Shaukat Ali notwithstanding both 'still love one another'[3] and would work together deceived nobody.

The open acknowledgment of differences was no lesson in mutual toleration. 'I tremble to publish our statements,' wrote Gandhi to Shaukat Ali who had commented on the former's statement. 'I have twice read your commentary,' wrote Gandhi, 'and I see the wide gulf that separates us in the affair. I am prepared to strongly condemn the publication of the poem but I am unable to condone the looting and arson. I do not endorse your opinion that the pamphlet was the cause of the conflagration. The ground was already prepared. . . . In my opinion the Khilafatists have greatly neglected their duty.'[4]

There was no reconciliation between the two communities. Gandhi withdrew. All that he could offer was a counsel of despair. 'Let Hindus and Mussalmans fight one another and fight to their hearts' content. Let them break each other's heads and let there flow a stream of blood out of it.'[5]

Speaking at a Khilafat Conference in Patna in September 1925, Gandhi proclaimed that he had lost his hold on both the Hindus and Muslims. Neither of the communities listened to him as was the case in 1921. And he claimed that the Ali Brothers too

2. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 119.
3. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XXVI, vii.
4. Ibid., XXVI, 191.
5. Ibid., XXVI, 215.

had lost their hold on both the communities. They never had a hold on the Hindu community but Mohamed Ali was certainly no longer the undisputed leader of Muslim India that he was in 1921. Much water had flown under the bridge since he stood on it to command the Muslims in the Civil Disobedience Movement.

In early 1925, a report appeared that two members of the Ahmadiyah sect had been stoned to death in Afghanistan as penalty for apostasy. The entire Muslim press and almost all Muslim religious leaders endorsed this action. Mohamed Ali alone stood out in his opposition to the Afghan Government. His was too radical an attitude for the orthodox and led to angry protests and shook the belief of millions of his admirers in his capacity to lead them. But Mohamed Ali stuck to his guns and refused resolutely to swim with the tide. He was not following a popular cause for he considered it his duty to give a lead even though the truth be bitter and the people found it unpalatable to swallow it. The circulation of his papers fell and so did his popularity. But he stuck to his view that apostasy could not be eliminated by eliminating the apostate.

Mohamed Ali was at this time a target of attack by Muslims who accused him to blindly following the lead of Gandhi. The Hindus were attacking Gandhi for 'his melodrama and an excess of sentimentality' and mixing religion with politics. Lala Lajpat Rai of the Punjab wrote a series of articles in the *Hindustan Times* and the *People*, his own newspaper. Mohamed Ali exposed Lajpat Rai whom he accused of trying to displace Gandhi's leadership.[6]

'The religion which must not enter politics [according to Lajpat Rai] is in particular the religion of the Muslims.' Lajpat Rai's first objection, pointed out Mohamed Ali, 'is to the respect shown by the Mahatma . . . for the religious obligations of the Muslims in the matter of Khilafat. Now, for all the help that Lalaji and the likes of his have rendered to the Khilafat cause, it may not have been rendered at all. . . . But let Lalaji remember,' warned

6. *Writings and Speeches*, pp. 373-89.

Mohamed Ali, 'that even if the Mahatmaji had not come so generously . . . to Muslim help, the Muslims . . . would not have given up the Khilafat cause. . . . There is an undying vitality in the cause as long as there is any vitality in Islam.'[7]

Mohamed Ali expressed his grave doubt whether Lajpat Rai could 'attract one honest Muslim to his "National" Congress' on terms other than those on which Mohamed Ali and his followers had joined it in Decemher 1919. 'These are the terms,' he concluded, 'on which alone a Muslim can agree to be a member of any nation. Men like Lalaji and that inveterate enemy of "Pan-Islamism," Mr. Bepin Chander Pal, may not like these terms, and to many other Hindus too they may seem very peculiar terms. . . . But . . . Muslim cooperation in an Indian nationality can only be had on terms we have mentioned. Lalaji and those who think with him may take it or leave it, we cannot alter the terms, for what our ill-informed critics call Pan-Islamism is nothing more and nothing less than Islam itself. . . .'[8]

But these terms, it was becoming increasingly clear, were not acceptable to the Hindus.

The portents were disturbing. C.R. Das, the eminent Bengali leader, had entered into a pact with co-operating Muslims in the Bengal Assembly. After his death in June 1925, the Muslims walked out of the Swaraj Party for the Hindu Swarajists were behaving as Hindus first and nationalists afterwards. They voted as a body against a resolution demanding to improve educational facilities at the Dacca University. The Congress ignored the demand and repudiated the Hindu-Muslim pact of C.R. Das. The worst fears of Muslims were coming true.

On the constitutional front Mohamed Ali tried to help the Swarajists, with whom he did not agree, to try their own methods of achieving success for a common objective. Earlier he had done his bit and succeeded beyond expectation in inducing the no-changers at the Special Session of the Congress at Delhi to permit

7. Ibid., pp. 387-88.

8. Ibid., p. 389.

the Swarajists to have their own way. At Cocanada he had brought round most of the no-changer stalwarts who could have easily defeated the Swarajists there, to confirm the Delhi concession.[9]

But the measure of success achieved by those who believed in progress through reforms can be judged by a speech Lord Birkenhead made in the House of Lords on 7 July 1925, announcing the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into Indian Reforms:[10]

'It has been the habit of the Swarajists' thought to declare in anticipation that no Constitution framed in the West can either be suitable for, or acceptable to, the people of India. It has always seemed to me that a very simple answer may be made to such a contention. . . . Our critics in India are of opinion that their great knowledge of Indian conditions qualifies them to succeed, where they tell us that we have failed. . . . Let them produce a Constitution which carries behind it a fair measure of general agreement among the great peoples of India. Such a contribution to our problems would nowhere be resented. It would, on the contrary, be most carefully examined by the Government of India, by myself, and I am sure, by the Commission, whenever that body may be assembled.'

By the end of 1925, the question of Indian reforms had reached a deadlock. Lord Birkenhead had given the Swarajists a challenge and a shock. Mohamed Ali called him Brokenhead!

The Government of India Act of 1919 provided for the appointment of a Royal Commission in 1928 to review the reforms in India. In a private letter written to Lord Reading on 10 December 1925, Lord Birkenhead explained the reasons which had led the British Government to advance the date:

'I always had it plainly in mind that we could not afford to run the slightest risk that the nomination of 1928 Commission should be in the hands of our successors. You can readily imagine what kind of a Commission in its personnel would have been appointed by Col. Wedgewood and his friends. I have, therefore, throughout been of the clear opinion that it would be necessary for us as a matter of elementary prudence to appoint a Commission

9. Ibid., p. 386.

10. 61 H.L. Deb. 5s., cols. 1074-75 and 1085-86.

not later than the summer of 1927. I should, therefore, like to receive your advice if at any moment you discern an opportunity for making this a useful bargain counter or for further disintegrating the Swarajist Party.'

He further said :

'I am sure that having regard to political contingencies in this country, we must keep the nomination of the personnel of the Commission in our own hands. In this matter, we cannot run the slightest risk. My present view, therefore, is—and I believe that the Prime Minister shares it—that we shall in any event, be playing for a safety if we are driven to nominate the Commission in the middle of 1927. If such an acceleration affords you any bargaining value, use it to the full and with the knowledge that you will be supported by the Government.'[11]

The Unity Conference, which passed a few pious resolutions in Delhi when Gandhi undertook his historic fast in Mohamed Ali's house in 1924, made little progress in tackling the problem of Hindu-Muslim differences. The large and unwieldy Committee appointed by it went round and round ; the procrastinating politicians indulged in dilatory debates and there was no reconciliation between the Hindu and the Muslim irreconcilables of the day. Mohamed Ali told the Muslims not to make any stipulations with the Hindus as regards the future and give up the insistence on safeguards by means of communal representation, not 'because we trust every Hindu who talks of communalism as being incompatible with nationalism. . . . It is cant and hypocricy on the part of a very large section of the Hindus,' he wrote, 'to talk of nationalism and to rebuke those who give expression to the apprehensions they feel as regards the rights of minority communities. . . . If, however, we ultimately find that we had been too trustful . . . if justice cannot be obtained by counting heads, it may become necessary to obtain it by cutting them.'[12]

The reluctance of the majority community to allow the Muslims to be in a majority even in two provinces out of so many in India

11. Quoted by G. Allana, *Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah*, pp. 192-93.
12. *Writings and Speeches*, pp. 357-58.

was not calculated to inspire confidence. If the strong and even dominant Hindu minorities in the Punjab and Bengal could be so nervous with regard to nominal Muslim majorities there, it was no wonder that the Muslim minorities throughout India sought to safeguard themselves by means of communal representation. Mohamed Ali suggested a solution. He wrote:

'In the present states of inter-communal feelings, the best thing to do, and the only one consistent with Muslim dignity, is:

'(*a*) to ask for clear-cut share of representation in exact proportion to population;

'(*b*) to leave it to the minority in every constituency to say whether it would have its representation secured to it through separate electorates or would trust to the justice of joint territorial electorates; and

'(*c*) to protect the minorities by means of fundamental laws which no majorities could alter and by means of a provision on the lines of the proviso in the Lucknow Pact, that no bill, nor any clause thereof, nor a resolution affecting any community—which question is to be determined by the members of that community in the elected body concerned—shall be proceeded with if three-fourth of the members of the community in that body oppose the bill or any clause thereof or the resolution.'[13]

Mohamed Ali advised the Muslims:

'. . . trust human nature, trust yourself and trust God. Do not tolerate for a minute longer the slavery that keeps both body and soul in chains. If you hesitate you are lost. Make no stipulations for the future but ask for Swaraj without any terms, without any conditions. Demand it. Struggle for it, suffer for it, and die for it. . . .'[14]

But Muslims were obviously not prepared to take a plunge without securing their planks. The advice exhumed idealism, but Muslims had become too cynical to be swayed by it.

The battle between Ibn Saud and Sharif Husain of Mecca provoked an extraordinary reaction in Muslim India. All eyes were auxiously scanning the troubled horizon of Hejaz. Mohamed Ali hailed the victories of Ibn Saud in the belief that they heralded

13. Ibid., p. 364.

14. Ibid., p. 369.

the dawn of a new era. His spiritual preceptor, Maulana Abdul Bari, had already become suspicious of the puritannical zeal of Ibn Saud, a follower of Abdul Wahhab. He had a detailed discussion with Mohamed Ali in the middle of August. Maulana Abdul Bari considered it reasonable that Ibn Saud, whose hordes had demolished some mosques and had destroyed domes of many tombs of the heroes of early Islam, should issue a statement repudiating this action. He should either reconstruct the demolished structures or should allow others to do so. Mohamed Ali had no quarrel with such demands but he looked at the problem from another angle. Here was an opportunity to drive out British influence from the Hejaz and to make it secure for a collective administration of the holy places by the Muslim world.

In the midst of this controversy came a Reuters message on 23 August 1925 reporting the bombardment of Medina by Ibn Saud's troops. It was insinuated that the dome of the Prophet's tomb had been hit. The message emanated from London and quoted Palestinian sources. The publication of this unconfirmed report was aimed at the credulous Muslims who had so far shown no sympathy for Sharif Husain. With the publication of the news the tide completely turned. Nobody paused for verification, and a raging and tearing campaign of public meetings, posters, resolutions condemning Ibn Saud was launched. Truth is the first casualty in any war; and in this battle of propaganda nobody had the time to pause and ponder. Mohamed Ali and his newspapers, the *Hamdard* and the *Comrade*, eschewed sensationalism with the result that there was a steep fall in their circulation.

The big issue in every Muslim home was now the question whether tombstones and domes were permitted or forbidden by the Shariat. The Ulema of Firangi Mahal, the religious scholars of Nadwah, the jurists of Deoband were all digging precedents and splitting hair. Mohamed Ali who declined to be dragged into this discussion was dubbed a Wahhabi, a heretic and the unabashed supporter of Ibn Saud who had wantonly desecrated the tombs of

the heroes of Islam. Firangi Mahal became the centre of opposition to Ibn Saud. Posters, pamphlets, press statements, poems, satires, public meetings, black-flag demonstrations, cartoons, lampoons, the whole range of acrimonious literature were arrayed against him—all instruments in the armoury of propaganda were pressed into servic under the command of Maulana Abdul Bari who was supported in this campaign by the Shiah landlords of Lucknow and leaders such as Hasrat Mohani and Mushir Husain Kidwai. Mohamed Ali paid a visit to Lucknow on 20 October and for the first time did not stay at Firangi Mahal. When somebody interrupted him in his speech in a mosque to ask how he explained his stand which was wholly opposed to that taken by Maulana Abdul Bari, Mohamed Ali snapped : 'I made him my spiritual leader so that he guides me in matters in which I need his guidance but in this particular matter he needs guidance from me and I consider it my duty to assist him.'

A public meeting was arranged in Amin-ud-Daulah Park in Lucknow but the Raja of Salimpur and his aides came in force and there was an uproar when Mohamed Ali got up to speak. The city which boasted of culture would not listen to a man who declined to be daunted by sheer force of numbers. The audience was adamant and the meeting had to be postponed.

On 8 November, Mohamed Ali made another attempt at a reasoned presentation of the case but he met with stiff opposition. He was the target of criticism and the line of argument was that Ibn Saud was a Wahhabi, he had desecrated domes ; Mohamed Ali was seeking to help him and therefore he too was a Wahhabi and guilty of desecration of domes! The abuse that was hurled at him during this controversy passed all bounds of decency. No holds were barred. The worst crime he was accused of having committed was a breach of faith for how dare he defy the line of his own spiritual preceptor ? Nobody was willing to concede him his integrity and an honest difference of opinion in a matter which had nothing to do with religion. But emotions had been roused to a

high pitch and reason had become irrelevant to the controversy. When Mohamed Ali reached Lucknow on 8 November he went to pay his respects to Maulana Abdul Bari but did not stay with him. This was unusual. It was considered an affront by the Firangi Mahal which joined forces with the Shiah landlords in disrupting the public meeting that Mohamed Ali was to address. In 1919, Swami Shardhanand, the Arya Samaj leader, could speak from the pulpit in a mosque but in 1925 Mohamed Ali could not be allowed to address a public meeting of Muslims in Lucknow. This time the disruptionists were armed and the Government stood by watching the conflict which was after all strengthening the hands of Sharif Husain of Mecca. Mohamed Ali managed at last to speak. He spoke for nearly two hours and calmly answered every single point of criticism in a forceful speech at the end of which an opponent like Hasrat Mohani got up and announced his complete agreement with him.

Mohamed Ali greatly respected Maulana Bari, an eminent divine of his day. In spiritual matters his obedience was unqualified but in political matters he reserved to himself the right to differ from his spiritual leader whose sincerity was unquestioned but whose judgment, more often than not, was swayed by those around him. Gandhi, an astute observer of men, offered the following assessmens of his character :

> 'He is a simple child of God. I have discovered no guile in him. He often speaks without thinking and often embarrasses his best friends. But he is as quick to apologize as he is ready to say things offensive. He means all he says for the time being. He is as sincere in his anger as he is in his apology. He once flared up at Maulana Mohamed Ali without just cause. I was then his guest. He thought he had said something offensive to me also. Maulana Mohamed Ali and I were just then leaving his place to entrain for Cawnpore. After our departure, he felt he had wronged us. He had certainly wronged Maulana Mohamed Ali, not me. But he sent a deputation to us at Cawnpore asking us to forgive him. He rose in my estimation by this act. I admit, however, that the Maulana Saheb can become a dangerous friend. But my point is that he is a friend. He does not say one thing and mean another. There are no mental reservations with him. I would trust such a friend

with my life, because I know that he will never stab me in the dark.'[15]

On 23 December 1925, Abul Kalam Azad presided over the Khilafat Committee meeting in Cawnpore where the Congress was also holding its session. Earlier in October the Committee had sent a delegation to Hejaz comprising Maulaua Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana Muhammad Irfan and Shuaib Qureshi. The deputation sent a telegram that Ibn Saud had taken over Medina and that Sharif Husain had fled. It was also indicated that Ibn Saud had plans to proclaim himself King. This came as a bombshell after all the trials and tribulations that Mohamed Ali had gone through in defending Ibn Saud. He was hoping that Saud's pledge that he had no territorial ambition was still valid.

The war ended in Hejaz in 1925, but the battle of the domes —the controversy on the dogma on this issue—continued in Muslim India. Mohamed Ali did not utter a single word during this acrimonious debate against the person of his spiritual preceptor. On 13 January 1926, he wrote an article entitled 'Test of Loyalty' in *Hamdard*. Detailing all the provocations in the face of which he had remained steadfastly loyal to Maulana Abdul Bari, Mohamed Ali declared that truth could not be compromised and had to be proclaimed irrespective of the views of his spiritual preceptor. He, therefore, renounced with a heavy heart his allegiance to Maulana Abdul Bari. Mohamed Ali had gone through much agony and mental anguish. He had taken a year to reach this decision. Through a strange coincidence Maulana Abdul Bari suffered a serious stroke of paralysis on 17 January—four days after the announcement of Mohamed Ali's decision. The Maulana died two days later. Mohamed Ali rushed to Lucknow and wept bitterly by the grave of Abdul Bari.

His article 'Test of Loyalty' appeared on 13 January 1926. The same day news was received that Ibn Saud had proclaimed himself King of Saudi Arabia—and this ended the battle of the domes

15. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XXIV, 146-47.

and the dream that Hejaz might become a Muslim Republic where the holy places would be administered by the collective will of the Muslim world. This was yet another stunning blow after the abolition of the Khilafat. Yet another cause had been irretrievably lost.[16]

WHILE the tension between the Hindu and Muslim communities expressed itself in frequent riots over the years, the Muslims co-operated with the Hindus on the constitutional front. In February 1924, all the elected members of the Legislative Assembly had voted with the Hindu members on Motilal Nehru's resolution demanding the establishment of self-government in India on the basis of Dominion Status, and calling for a Round Table Conference to settle the issue. There months later, Jinnah, in his Presidential Address to the Muslim League at Lahore, had called for Hindu-Muslim unity and had asked the Government to 'meet the universal demand' which was contained in the resolution of the Assembly.[17]

A number of leading Hindu politicians were persuaded to attend the annual session of the Muslim League which was held in Bombay at the end of 1924. But by 1926, it seemed that the cause had become hopeless. Gandhi had sealed his lips and seldom spoke on the Hindu-Muslim question. He had withdrawn into an ostentatious retirement from politics. When an eminent Muslim leader complained about his reticence, he replied : 'What can I write ? . . . Since I am unable to bring about a compromise what is the good of my writing ? . . . I cannot accept that Malaviyaji and others are enemies of the Muslims. . . . Nor can I agree to calling Mohamed Ali an enemy of the Hindus. . . . I can never agree to the rule of blood for blood and temple for a mosque. But who listens to me ?'[18]

16. For details see Abdul Majid Daryabadi, op. cit., I, 220-334.
17. *The Civil & Military Gazette*, 26 May 1924.
18. *Collected Works of M. Gandhi*, XXX, 531-32.

And yet it was true that the mass of Muslims had by now begun to look upon Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya as the real enemies of Islam in India. The bogey of the combined Muslim 'hosts' raised by Lajpat Rai haunted the Hindu mind. In 1926, Lajpat Rai resigned from the Swarajist Party accusing it of malevolent intentions towards Hindus. Malaviya was the principal organiser of the Hindu Mahasabha and wielded great influence on Gandhi. He was whipping up feelings of Hindus who were being aggressively organised to 'defend' themselves against the Muslim minority. Bhai Parmanand of the Arya Samaj was being acclaimed by the Hindu community as *devta-swarup* (god-incarnate). For this god the question of unity between Hindus and Muslims did not arise. He saw only two alternatives—either the Hindus should assimilate the entire Muslim community or be prepared to be assimilated by it. His choice was obvious.

In this atmosphere came the verdict of the people in the elections of 1926 which were fought on national *versus* communal lines. The story is best told in the words of C.S. Ranga Iyer, a member of the Swarajist Party in the Central Legislative Assembly :[19]

'The elections of 1926 were fought on national *versus* communal lines. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai fought Pandit Motilal Nehru and Mr. Srinivasa Iyenger, on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha against the Congress and its pro-Muslim nationalism. Mr. Srinivasa Iyenger, who is a very energetic politician and capable of organizing his forces, captured a large number of seats in South India. Pandit Motilal who has the special gift of riding roughshod over the feelings of his friends and opponents . . . met with what he himself mournfully described as a "veritable rout". Every Hindu Congress candidate in the U.P. was defeated. . . . Pandit Motilal Nehru himself would have lost this seat had not Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya with his usual generosity given him an uncontested seat.

'The success of the Hindu Mahasabha made a profound impression on the Congress leaders, who practically accepted the Hindu position and surrendered to Hindu Mahasabha. . . .

'In the Assembly leadership passed in effect from the hands of the Congress Pandit to the Mahasabha Pandit. The two parties

19. Iyer, *India : Peace or War*, pp. 116-17.

(i.e. Congress and Mahasabha) which virtually followed identical policies chose to sit in separate blocs, and Pandit Malaviya's lead was invariably followed.'

The spectacular success of the Hindu Mahasabha clearly indicated the way the Hindu mind was working. The frightened leadership of the Congress drew closer to the Hindu Mahasabha and the line of distinction between the two began progressively to be clouded. Even Jinnah who was a stout Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity and had resolutely opposed the principle of separate representation had come to the conclusion by 1926 that

'the Congress point of view on the subject of Muslim position was far from reassuring. No responsible Congressman or Hindu leader had come forward with a concrete proposal. . . . Nationalism could not be created by having a mixed electorate.'[20]

Mohamed Ali was convinced that the Congress and the Mahasabha were, between them, leading the country to disaster. He could not accept the scheme of things conceived by the Hindu Mahasabha. The majority rule without safeguards for the Muslim minority was the worst form of tyranny. He clearly saw that the Hindus were preparing to take revenge from the Muslims for the real or imaginary grievances that they entertained against their forbears who had ruled the country for a thousand years. Dogged by ill-health he continued to campaign with courage and persistence against both the Hindu and the Muslim extremists. With his serious illness in the beginning of the year, the *Comrade*, the instrument which he had used with such effect in the cause of amity and independence, had become irregular until its final demise with the issue of 22 January 1926. In this issue, Mohamed Ali gave a stirring farewell message : 'Whatever truth we had we have declared freely and shared it with all. . . . We have lived because we have dared, and we shall still dare, and we shall still live.'

In April, Motilal Nehru came to see Mohamed Ali in Delhi. He wrote to Gandhi : '. . . . While I was there, the conversation was more or less desultory interspersed with a few acrimonious

20. *The Indian Quarterly Register* (1926), XXI, 376.

passaages-at-arms between Mohamed Ali and me. All Hindu Congressmen, with the exception of yourself, Jawahar and me were condemned as open enemies of Muslims. . . .'[21]

This was the candid opinion of Mohamed Ali. By the end of 1926 even Motilal Nehru was included in this category. While Mohamed Ali was still seriously ill a call came for a meeting of the Motamar al-Alam al-Islami (The International Muslim Congress) in Saudi Arabia. Mohamed Ali could not resist this call. He went with his wife to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. He bought a ticket for the deck for that was all he could afford but the Shipping Company put him in a first-class cabin. Voyaging in the heat of May he reached Mecca to discover that Ibn Saud had got together an assembly from which all independent elements were excluded. Mohamed Ali, who had pleaded passionately for a republican form of government in the Hejaz, was outvoted and outwitted by Ibn Saud who succeeded in prevailing upon the Assembly to confirm his title to the Kingdom. Mohamed Ali had a light attack of paralysis and but for his indomitable courage he could have succumbed to it. He came back home a broken man.

The Muslims in India were divided into warring camps over Ibn Saud—those who supported his iconoclastic zeal and those who condemned his profanity in demolishing numerous tombs and domes. Mohamed Ali belonged to neither and fought both. The supporters of Ibn Saud he annoyed because he accused them of the worst innovation in Islam—the Kingship; and his opponents he could not support because he found no clear injunction in Islam against the razing of the domes. He declined to take his stand on petty issues and remained steadfast in his belief that the Caliphate in Islam is irreconcilable with the institution of hereditary kingship. As long as Ibn Saud assured him that he had no intention to rule over Hejaz, he supported his cause, although a vocal majority of the Muslim community accused him of abetting the profanity of Ibn Saud. But now that Ibn Saud had had himself recognised as

21. B.R. Nanda, *The Nehrus*, p. 266.

King of Saudi Arabia, Mohamed Ali opposed him with all the vehemence at his command and charged him with disrupting the cause of Islam and betraying his own solemn pledges to the Muslims. He went to the extent of seriously considering the possibility of advising Muslims to refrain from performing the pilgrimage to Mecca until such time as Ibn Saud mended his ways. An uproar ensued and those that has opposed Ibn Saud were now accusing Mohamed Ali of preventing Muslims to discharge their religious duties! Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana Abdul Qadir Kasuri, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and others were railing at Mohamed Ali with great relish. The depravity and depth to which the attacks had sunk is better imagined than described. A wholly fictitious photograph, for example, showed Mohamed Ali prostrating before Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the idol of orthodox Hindus!

Never in his experience had Mohamed Ali felt the atmosphere in Northern India so suffocating and so sickening as in 1926.

In April, Lord Irwin succeeded to the Viceroyalty. Even by the end of the year he did not have for the King 'any very encouraging news as to the diminution of feeling between Hindus and Moslems'.[22]

The atmosphere was dark, dismal and distressing. Before the year ran out Swami Shardhanand, a Hindu leader, was killed by a Muslim fanatic. Instead of condemning the dastardly act of an individual coward the Hindu press seized the occasion to curse the entire community and the 'religion' which, it alleged, sanctioned such methods. Malaviya eulogised the 'martyr' and the Mahasabha started a public fund to raise a memorial to the departed hero. There was universal nervousness in the Muslim community. A rumour spread that the Hindus would seek their revenge by attacking Mohamed Ali—the picturesque symbol of Indian Islam which claimed extra-territorial loyalties. But the agitation subsided and Mohamed Ali who took no security precautions returned safe from Gauhati in Assam where he had gone to attend the Congress Session in December 1926.

22. Irwin to H.M. the King, 11 June 1927, HC/1.

Chapter Thirteen

RAIN OF CONSTITUTIONS

[1927-1929]

Summary of Muslim Demands—Conference of Muslim Leaders and the Delhi Proposals—The Hindu Reaction to Delhi Proposals—The Muslim Agitation against the Pamphlet Rangila Rasul—*Appointment of the Simon Commission and Its Boycott—Split in the Muslim League—War of Words between the Lahore League and the Calcutta League—The Closure of* Hamdard—*Medical Treatment in England—Muslims Reject the* Nehru Report—*Disenchantment with the Congress—Recommendations of the Muslim All-Parties Conference at Delhi—Proposal for a Round Table Conference—Mohamed Ali's Brief Visit to Burma—Death of a Daughter—Rajpal, Author of* Rangila Rasul, *Assassinated—The Congress Declares Independence as Its Creed*

THE year 1927 is a turning point in the annals of India. By this time the Muslim demands in the formulation of which Mohamed Ali had played a leading role, could be summed up as follows:

(1) Separation of Sind from Bombay;
(2) Representation in legislatures and local bodies on the basis of population;
(3) The Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and the Frontier Province not to be interfered with in any territorial redistribution;
(4) The Frontier Province to be placed in a position of equality with the major provinces of India;
(5) Maintenance of *status quo* in separate representation of communities with the provision that any community could abandon separate electorates in favour of joint electorates.

The Muslims were firm on their demands about their majority provinces, but were willing to keep open the question of joint or separate electorates.

Meeting in the Western Hotel, Delhi, on 20 March 1927, some thirty Muslim leaders representing various viewpoints discussed the five alternative suggestions received from the Congress President, Srinivasa Iyengar. Mr Jinnah presided over the Conference. The debate lasted long and there was no solution in sight. The session adjourned for the evening prayers. Mohamed Ali prayed ardently for some way out of the darkness which was enveloping the country. It seems that the prayer was heard for 'we reconvened immediately after the prayers the resolution moved by the Vice-President of the Central Legislative Assembly [Sir Muhammad Yaqub] containing a proposal of joint electorates had been accepted. Thus the problem was settled.' 'I am convinced,' said Mohamed Ali, 'that the coming generations will always feel proud of this decision of ours.'[1]

The decisions of the meeting came to be known as Delhi Proposals.[2]

The resolution carried unanimously at the Delhi Conference recommended the adpotion of joint electorates by Muslims in return for statutory Muslim majorities in the Punjab and Bengal Assemblies, separation of Sind from Bombay, reforms in the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan, and a one-third Muslim representation in the Central Assembly. In provincial assemblies 'weightage' was dropped and seats were to be assigned strictly in proportion to population. The scheme was to replace the Lucknow Pact of 1916 between the League and the Congress.

The Working Committee of the Congress met at Delhi at the same time. It welcomed the Muslim Proposals and appointed a Sub-Committee comprising the Congress President, Srinivasa Iyengar, Mrs Sarojini Naidu, Motilal Nehru and Mohamed Ali to discuss details.

But the only part of the Muslim offer which was welcome to the Hindus was the mixed vote. They wanted to have their cake

1. Ashiq Husain Batalvi, *Iqbal ke Akhiri do Sal*, p. 217.
2. See *Times of India*, 22 March 1927, for the full text of the Proposals.

and eat it too. Mr Jinnah warned that the Proposals had to be accepted as a whole. This the Hindus were not prepared to do. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was perhaps the only Hindu leader who realised that the opportunity offered by the Delhi Proposals could be allowed to pass only at the expense of Hindu-Muslim unity. In a public meeting in Bombay in July 1927, Sir Tej said :

'The gesture contained in the Delhi Proposals was one which deserved much better consideration, much more serious treatment and much larger measure of thoughtful response than had been given to it by the Hindus. It did seem to me that those who were responsible for the representation of the Hindu view in public life might have shown at a juncture like the present greater statesmanship and generosity and readiness to grasp the hand of friendship which had been extended.'[3]

The prevailing Hindu sentiment was editorially summed up by the *Hindustan Times*: 'In what way is the establishment of joint electorates connected with the separation of Sind, and the introduction of reforms in N.W.F.P.?' it asked. 'The object Muslims have in view is to obtain as much as they can while conceding as little as possible.'[4]

On 23 March the Punjab Hindu Mahasabha passed a resolution denying the Indian National Congress any *locus standi* to represent the Hindu community in the negotiations with the Muslim League, and declared that any settlement arrived at would not be binding on the Hindus. The situation was further complicated by the publication in Lahore at about this time of a highly provocative pamphlet entitled *Rangila Rasul*, which was written by a Hindu to blaspheme the Prophet of Islam.

There was an uproar in Muslim India which demanded a deterrent punishment to the Hindu author who had deliberately set about to hurt their susceptibilities. The bench of the Punjab High Court which heared the case came to the conclusion that, however deplorable the language of the author, it did not constitute mischief as defined by the Indian Penal Code, Section 295

3. *Times of India*, 16 July 1927.
4. Quoted in Abdul Hamid, *Muslim Separatism in India*, p. 194.

of which did not provide against any insult to a prophet, saint or another person. Justice Kanwar Dileep Singh, a Christian, who had written the judgment on behalf of the bench, which included a Muslim judge, became the target of attack by the Muslim press. Mohamed Ali did not take part in this controversy and was on this account accused by some Muslim leaders, notably Khwaja Hasan Nizami of Delhi and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan of Lahore, of wilful silence amounting to an abetment of the crime. When Mohamed Ali did express his views at last in an editorial of *Hamdard* on 27 June, he asked whether the fault was that of the judge or of law and came to the latter conclusion. He demanded the amendment of the law rather than the resignation of the presiding judge. Mohamed Ali invited all Muslim members of the Indian Legislature to a Conference in Delhi on 15 August to consider fresh legislation to prevent wanton vilification of holy personages. Section 295-A of the Indian Penal Code which amended the current law was drafted by Mohamed Ali and stands as a monument to his constructive leadership at a time when lesser men were railing at him and were making malicious insinuations against him. The law was amended in August 1927.[5] Its operative part read:

> 'Whoever with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of His Majesty's subjects, by words either spoken or written, or by visible representations, insults or attempts to insult religion or religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with 2 years imprisonment, or with fine, or with both.'

The Bill was debated and placed on the Statute Book within two days.

Lord Irwin had for some time been thinking of the possibility of convening a conference of Hindus and Muslims and of addressing them a 'powerful allocation' if it could do some good.[6]

5. See L.A.D. Vol, IV, No. 49, p. 3337, for the introduction of the bill in the Assembly on 24 August 1927.

6. Irwin to Viscount Halifax, 11 May 1927, HC/27.

On 29 August 1927, the Vicoroy called a Special Session of the Legislative Assembly and spoke 'to the conscience and heart of India upon the question which still dwarfs all others in her life.' 'I am not exaggerating when I say that during the 17 months that I have been in India, the whole landscape has been overshadowed by the lowering clouds of communal tension, which have repeatedly discharged their thunderbolts, spreading far throughout the land their devastating havoc.'[7]

But the 'unity conference' of the leaders which met in Simla at the instance of the Khilafat Committee in September 1927 broke down within a few days. The number of serious Hindu-Muslim riots was rising steeply. There were eleven in 1923, eighteen in 1924, sixteen in 1925, thirty-five in 1926 and thirty-one up to November 1927. The death roll for five years was about 450, and at least 5000 people had been injured.

In November 1927 was appointed the Simon Commission, led by Sir John Simon, and including the Labour Prime Minister-to-be, Mr Attlee. Instead of conciliating, as was the intention, it had the opposite effect and outraged Indian sentiment by the omission of any Indian from the Commission. The British Government had calculated that the Indian Muslims would not join the Hindus in boycotting a wholly English Commission because it was in their interest that the Hindu members should not be allowed an opportunity to join hands with the Labour members of the Commission to produce a majority report which would run counter to the essential interests of the Mussalmans. Apparently a situation did exist in India, especially in the Punjab, which warranted such an assumption. Thirty years later, however, Irwin was to admit the failure of his advisers to understand the 'full significance' of 'some new forces' which were working on the subcontinent.[8]

The Muslims, despite their differences with the Hindus, had

7. L.A.D , Vol. IV, No. 5, p. 3499.

8. The Earl of Halifax, *Fullness of Days* (London, 1957), p. 116.

made common cause with them in the national struggle; and if Hindus would permit them a little sense of security, they were determined to join forces with them in the interest of the common cause that was India's independence. The Delhi Proposals were a move in this direction. The Congress had not yet rejected them when the appointment of the Simon Commission was announced. The Muslim leaders, therefore, reacted in much the same way as did the Hindus against the omission of the Indian element from the Commission. As an alteranative to the inclusion of Indians on the Commission the Government proposed collaboration between the Commission and a Committee of the Central Legislature. Abdur Rahim, Shafi, Iqbal and Fazl-i-Husain rejected this proposal. Fazl-i-Husain, a member of the Punjab Government, was accused of indiscipline by the Governor who charged him with a public condemnation of a decision by the British Cabinet. A clash between the two was averted when Hailey decided to drop the matter.[9]

Jinnah declared a 'constitutional war' on Britain at the Muslim League Session in Calcutta in December 1927. A.K. Ghaznavi, in a public statement on 23 December, asked: 'May we inquire what title Jinnah has to speak on behalf of the Muslims of India when in his past political career he has never advocated their legitimate claims and when he seems to have nothing in common with them except perhaps the name of the Revered Prophet (peace be upon him) which he bears?'[10]

But this could not be said of his namesake, Mohamed Ali. On 22 Movember, he sent out a challenge to Sir Muhammad Shafi and Sir Muhammad Iqbal to address with him a Muslim mass meeting in any locality in the Punjab and obtain from it any other verdict than that of a boycott of the Simon Commission.[11]

9. See Hailey to Fazl-i-Husain, 24 November 1927; Fazl-i-Husain to Hailey, 6 December 1927; Hailey to Fazl-i-Husain. 7 December; Fazl-i-Husain to Hailey, 8 December.

10. *The Civil & Military Gazette* (C. & M.G.), Lahore, 26 December 1927.

11. Ibid., 28 November 1927.

In Lucknow Mohamed Ali addressed a public meeting advocating the boycott of the Simon Commission. The Muslims who had been completely disillusioned by the non-co-operation of Hindus by now were in no mood to co-operate with them even in the boycott of a Commission which they genuinely felt had disregarded their feelings and interests by excluding any Indian from its membership. Hasrat Mohani, the radical Muslim leader, who could certainly not be accused of any sympathy for the British Government, was present in this meeting in which he led the vocal element opposing Mohamed Ali's advice to boycott the Simon Commission.

Mohamed Ali, spotting Hasrat Mohani in the audience, thundered at him: 'Are you for cooperation or non-cooperation with the Commission?' 'I am neither for cooperation nor for non-cooperation,' replied Hasrat Mohani. 'Well, then,' said Mohamed Ali, 'you want neither cooperation nor non-cooperation; all that you want, then, is merely an operation!'

This put the audience in a receptive mood and those who had come to disrupt the meeting listened with sympathy to Mohamed Ali.

Later, Mohamed Ali went to Lahore and in a public meeting outside Mochi Gate challenged Sir Muhammad Shafi, and said that if he was in favour of co-operation with the Simon Commission, and was against the Delhi Proposals, he should come to an open meeting so that the public could hear his arguments. Sir Muhammad Shafi did not accept this challenge for he could not possibly defy the Muslim League which was supported by Jinnah, the Ali Brothers, Dr Kitchlew, Zafar Ali Khan, Dr Ansari and others at this time. But the intrigue went on behind the scenes. Hailey, the Governor of the Punjab, encouraged Firoz Khan Noon, a young Minister in the Punjab Government, 'to take this opportunity to assume the leadership in Muslim politics' in the midst of 'a good deal of complaint at the time that Sir Muhammad Shafi

was not taking a sufficiently strong line.'[12]

The machinations of Hailey succeeded when on 13 November 1927 the Punjab Branch of the Muslim League, of which Sir Muhammad Iqbal was the Secretary, advised the country, by twenty-two votes to four, against a boycott of the Commission and set up Shafi as their leader. Mohamed Ali characterised the decision as 'a very great mistake'. That a man who gave dinners to Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer should lead the Muslims was a disgrace to the community. He said. 'The League is no longer an institution. It is a stronghold of reactionaries available for officials to oppose Muslim or national aspirations . . . the whole thing appears to be an intrigue of officialdom. That even the Punjab, the Ulster of India, will not accept such a servility as that of the League's Council, is proved by the resolutions of the Punjab Khilafat Committee.' He suggested that the Session of the League should be held in Madras and if the reactionaries persisted in their present tactics, then the League should either be reorganised or entirely smashed.[13]

The next six weeks were devoted to a war of words between the Lahore League and what was called the Calcutta League. The Lahore League under the leadership of Shafi rejected the Delhi Proposals outright and the Calcutta League under the leadership of Jinnah did not accept them without qualifications.

The resolution passed at the Calcutta League qualified the acceptance of the joint electorates by the following:[14]

(*a*) that Sind was actually constituted as a separate autonomous province;
(*b*) that reforms were actually introduced in the Frontier Province and in Baluchistan;
(*c*) that seats in the Legislatures of the Punjab and Bengal were fixed on the basis of the communal ratio of the population; and

12. Hailey to Irwin, 23 November 1927, HYC/11.
13. C. & M. G., Lahore, 24 November 1927.
14. See *The Statesman*, 1 January 1921.

(*d*) that weightage of representation is given to the minorities in the provincial legislatures except in the Punjab and Bengal.

At the Madras Congress of December 1927, Gandhi was seen in public after a long time. Jawaharlal Nehru who had just then returned from the Soviet Union announced his conversion to Socialism. The goal of Swaraj was changed to that of 'complete independence'. Writing in *Young India*, Gandhi criticised the Session as having 'sunk to the level of a schoolboy's debating society,' and warned Jawaharlal against going too fast.

AT fifty Mohamed Ali looked at least ten years older than his age. A chronic patient of diabetes he was remarkably careless about his diet. He relished rich food and indulged in it knowing full well that it was poison for him. His hours were most irregular. He had hardly any time for himself. The result was a near collapse in 1928. He was dogged by ill-health and constant financial worries. The *Comrade* was closed down in 1926; the *Hamdard* was on the downgrade; its circulation had steeply fallen and friends were already trying to arrange that Mohamed Ali could at least live on what he called *khaddar* scale, i.e. the standard of living which was allowed him in jail. Mohamed Ali was heavily in debt. The Hindu leaders were well provided for by their community. Some Muslim friends, notably Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, arranged to provide for a modest monthly allowance for Mohamed Ali. He, however, declined the offer with thanks. With the sweat of his brow, he declared, would he earn bread as long as he was alive. His self-respect would not allow him to accept charity no matter how nobly it was cloaked. His ebbing strength was being wasted on slow grinding day to day conquest of nagging difficulties. His health was fast giving way. He could not afford the treatment he needed. During these anxious days Mohamed Ali happened to meet the Maharaja of Alwar in March 1928 at a party in Delhi. The Maharaja who wrote Urdu poetry and had suffered at the hands of the British Government was a great admirer of his. He

offered to send Mohamed Ali to Europe for medical treatment but the generosity was embarrassing to Mohamed Ali who was most reluctant to accept it. His medical adviser and personal friend, Dr M.A. Ansari, joined in the insistence, and the Big Brother sided with the Maharaja of Alwar with the result that Mohamed Ali acquiesced at last to the pressure of his friends.

On the eve of his departure, in an editorial entitled 'Farewell,' in the *Hamdard* of 20 May, Mohamed Ali wrote :

'A newspaper can run only when the people feel the need for it and subscribe to it in substantial numbers. Since the people today do not seem to feel the need of *Hamdard*, I am obliged to close it down. . . . [Recounting his sad state of debt and serious ill-health, Mohamed Ali added :] I will nevertheless continue to serve the people. I shall be available to them in the Jami Majid or any public place for consultation on public affairs—I will continue to participate, like any other poor Indian and Muslim citizen, in the activities of the Congress, the Khilafat and the Jamiat-ul-Ulama. . . . This is no retreat [he insisted], it is only migration from Mecca and may God [he prayed] soon give us good tidings of the conquest of Mecca !'

Like the *Comrade*, the *Hamdard* was a documented diagnosis of his age, a personal response to the trials and tribulations of a nation which was no longer prepared to listen to Mohamed Ali.[15] He edited his papers with the fidelity of a lover. The demise of *Comrade* became bearable because *Hamdard* was literally what it meant, a friend, a sympathiser, a well-wisher, an instrument of sharing his thoughts with his people. His expressive capacity was still powerful and the degree of intensity was very great. Even if he wanted to, Mohamed Ali could not divorce himself from the suffering of his people, for without them he would be like fish out of water. From his people he drew sustenance, courage and the will to live and serve ; this contact was the spark which ignited in

15. At about this time Iqbal was pointing out with regret that the protagonists of Khilafat had gone far away from their objective. 'They beckon us to a variety of nationalism,' he wrote, 'which no sincere Muslim can accept for a moment' (Sheikh Ataullah, Ed , *Iqbal Namah* [*Letters of Iqbal*], I, 158 : Letter dated 18 March 1928 to Sulaiman Nadvi).

him life and vigour. It was indeed with a heavy heart that Mohamed Ali made the decision to close down *Hamdard*—with it snapped a link, a lifelong relationship which, with all its pain, agony and sacrifice, had invested him with a sense of mission, a sense of dedication to his people, and a feeling of being in touch, being in constant communication with them. Now there was a void in his life. He prayed in his mind for endurance, wisdom and forbearance.

Mohamed Ali married away his third daughter in May and then left for England for treatment in June. On his way from Delhi to Bombay, he called on the mausoleum of the great mystic Saint in Ajmer, Khwajah Muin-ud-Din Chishti, and visited Gandhi in the Sabarmati Ashram.

Within a couple of months of his arrival in England he lost 14 lbs. in weight and 4 inches in the waist. He was living on fruits and vegetables although occasionally he defied medical instructions and indulged in his favourite food ! Rest and recreation did him some good. He kept in touch with his friends and went to the House of Commons to listen to an occasional debate on India. Once he offered his prayers in the visitors' gallery. It caused a sensation in the House of Commons and the next morning's papers were full of this unusual occurrence.

On his way back from England Mohamed Ali visited France, Germany, Turkey, Palestine and Iraq, and returned home in December 1928 and plunged deep into the troubled waters of politics almost immediately on arrival.

Between the peaks of power and glory lie vast flat stretches of monotony, to say nothing of the black gulfs of despair. But Mohamed Ali was by no means daunted by the magnitude of the task. As always he was at his best when confronted with a formidable challenge.

THE year 1928 was a year of drafting Constitutions. While the Simon Commission was in India to recommend a draft for a Constitution for India, the Congress decided that she alone was competent to

do so. Invitations went out to various political organisations and a conference sat debating the draft for a whole month in Delhi. The Hindu Mahasabha dominated the proceedings. The Muslim League withdrew and the discussions dragged on until 11 March when the conference was adjourned. When it reconvened in Bombay in May 1928, Motilal Nehru struck a new note. He joined hands with the Hindu Mahasabha and repudiated the Congress acceptance of the Delhi Proposals. A Committee was set up under Motilal Nehru to draft a Constitution for India. Among the Muslim members were Sir Ali Imam and Shuaib Qureshi. The Committee produced a report in less than three months. The draft was prepared mainly by Motilal Nehru and his son.[16] The Muslims boycotted the Committee at every stage. The fact of the boycott is writ large on the pages of the *Nehru Report* itself. Out of the two Muslim members one, Sir Ali Imam, attended only one sitting and signed the *Report*, while the other, Shuaib Qureshi, resigned his membership.

The *Nehru Report* which was prepared in a hurry was superficial and showed an utter lack of understanding of the Muslim mood. 'The Muslims being in a minority in India as a whole,' it said, 'fear that the majority may harass them, and to meet this difficulty they have made a novel suggestion—that they should at least dominate in some parts of India. The Hindus, on the other hand, although in a great majority all over India, are in a minority in Bengal and the Punjab and in Sind, Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province. In spite of their all-India majority they are afraid of the Muslims in those provinces.

'We cannot have one community domineering over another. We may not be able to prevent this entirely, but the object we should aim at is not to give dominion to one over another but to prevent the harassment and exploitation of any individual or group by another. If the fullest religious liberty is given, and cultural

16. See Motilal Nehru to Gandhi, 11 to 19 Jully 1928 (Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters* [London, 1960], pp. 60 and 65).

autonomy provided for, the communal problem is in effect solved, although people may not realise it.'[17]

The Nehru Committee made three proposals to this effect:

(1) A Declaration of Rights should be inserted in the Constitution assuring the fullest liberty of conscience and religion.
(2) The N.W.F.P. should acquire the same status as other provinces and Sind should be detached from Bombay and become a separate province.

This concession was hotly opposed by the Mahasabha for it was prompted by that 'novel suggestion' of local 'domination,' but the Committee defended it on the principle of self-determination: 'To say from the larger viewpoint of nationalism that no "communal" provinces should be created is, in a way, equivalent to saying from the still wider international point of view that there should be no separate nations,'[18] argued the Nehru Committee.

(3) Separate electorates should be discarded and all elections should be made by joint or mixed votes. No weightage should be allowed. 'A minority must remain a minority whether any seats are reserved for it or not.'[19]

Taken as a whole the *Nehru Report* took away the separate electorates and the weightage, the two advantages that the Congress had grudgingly conceded under the Lucknow Pact, without giving Muslims anything substantial in return. The *Report* was submitted to the All-Parties Conference at the end of August 1928 at Lucknow —where the Muslim League was conspicuous by its absence. Jinnah and Mohamed Ali were absent from the country at this time.

The Viceroy, Lord Irwin, in a report to the King in September 1928 commented on the constitutional situation in India as follows:

'I mentioned to Your Majesty, earlier in my letter, the All

17. See pp. 25, 28-29, 49 of the *Nehru Report*.
18. Ibid., p. 32.
19. Ibid., p. 52.

Parties Conference Report. It is now clear that, although this Report has elicited, as was inevitable, a chorus of eulogy from the Hindu Press, it has been received with something like dismay both by the Moslem community and the Princes, and with feelings of considerable suspicion by other communities. Time will, I think, make it evident that the authors of the Report and the engineers of its reception have overrated the value of general phrases and artificial agreements, and that for the next few months, we may anticipate a developing volume of criticism from different quarters against it.'[20]

The subsequent events justified Lord Irwin's assessment. In November he reported to the King:

'Moslem anxiety has in no way been allayed, and they are taking every opportunity of giving vent to their concern about the future position of their community in the evidence they are tendering to Sir John Simon's Commission.'[21]

On return from England Mohamed Ali went straight to Calcutta to attend the All-Parties National Convention which met there on 22 December 1928. A battle royal took place in the Convention whether the Muslim Proposals should be incorporated in the *Nehru Report*. The only Muslims who supported the *Nehru Report* were Abul Kalam Azad, Dr Ansari, Sir Ali Imam and Dr Kitchlew. The Convention defeated all amendments moved on behalf of Muslims. The *Nehru Report* conceded 25% of seats in the Central Assembly while the Muslims demanded 33%. After a good deal of bargaining Motilal Nehru agreed to 27%. There was an utter lack of vision and foresight. Muslims were being estranged over a difference of 6% of seats in the Central Legislature. The Convention decided that the Muslims would have joint electorates and representation according to their numerical strength and nothing more.

The Delhi Proposals in shaping which Mohamed Ali had played a leading role had been consigned to the waste-paper basket. Mohamed Ali was furious. He charged Motilal Nehru, not only

20. Irwin to H.M. the King, 26 September 1928, HP/1.
21. Irwin to H.M. the King, 6 November 1928, ibid.

with going back on the Delhi Proposals, but also with repudiating the resolutions of the Madras Congress. He accused Gandhi of inconsistency and of abandoning the Muslims. Mohamed Ali received a mandate from the Khilafat Committee to attend the All-Parties Conference with a view to seeking suitable amendments. But the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha had made up their mind. The Conference was presided over by Dr Ansari, a man who was introduced to politics by Mohamed Ali. Nobody listened to Mohamed Ali and the Nehru constitution was voted exactly as Motilal desired it. Mohamed Ali felt deeply hurt and wounded. He deplored Gandhi's fervent canvassing of the *Report*. He quoted from Gandhi's writings to show that he was now striving for different goals. He charged :[22]

'Gandhi has defeated all Muslim attempts for a compromise. He wants to kill communalism by ignoring it. He is giving free reins to the communalism of the majority. The Nehru constitution is the legalised tyranny of numbers and is the way to rift and not peace. It recognises the rank communalism of the majority as nationalism. The safeguards proposed to limit the high-handedness of the majority are branded as communal.'

Mohamed Ali hit the nail on the head when he pointed out that Hindus did not desire to live as a minority anywhere, not even in the N.W.F.P. They cry hoarse in bidding Muslims to live as a minority in the country and dispel the fear of Hindu majority, but they are out to deny the Muslims the very safeguards that they demand for themselves.[23]

By the end of 1928, Mohamed Ali was completely disenchanted with the Congress. The process of estrangement which began in 1923 when he was elected President of the Congress was now complete. In December 1919, virtually the whole of Muslim India went into the Congress with Mohamed Ali. Nine years later virtually the whole of Muslim India walked out of it with Mohamed Ali. The number of Muslim leaders who remained in the Congress after

22. Jafari, *Nigarishat-i-Mohamed Ali*, pp. 248-54.
23. Sarwar, *Mazamin-i-Mohamed Ali*, II, 18.

Mohamed Ali's break with it was less than a score; they could be counted on the fingers of one hand—Abul Kalam Azad, T.A.K. Sherwani, Dr Ansari being the most prominent. Even Shuaib Qureshi, who was treated as a son by Gandhi and was given the responsibility of editing *Young India*, was disillusioned and finally quit the precincts of the Sabarmati Ashram.

The Punjab group of Khilafatists, however, retained its connection with the National Congress.

Jawaharlal Nehru thought it was a misfortune that Mohamed Ali left the country for Europe for medical treatment in the summer of 1928. Had he been in India it is conceivable that matters might have shaped differently.[24]

From the Calcutta Convention Mohamed Ali went to Delhi to attend the Muslim All-Parties Conference presided over by the Aga Khan. The Conference formulated the following proposals. Jinnah did not attend the meeting because the moving spirit behind it was Sir Muhammad Shafi who had set up a rival League in Lahore:[25]

(1) The Government of India should be federal;
(2) Residuary powers to vest in the Provinces and States;
(3) Any bill opposed by three-fourths members of any community present should not be proceeded with;
(4) Right of separate electorates of Muslims to remain intact till they themselves give it up;
(5) One-third representation of Muslim members in the Central Legislature;
(6) Retention of the present basis of representation in the provinces where the Muslims are in a minority;
(7) No majority to be converted into a minority or an equality;
(8) Reforms be introduced in Baluchistan and in the N.W.F.P.;
(9) Separation of Sind;
(10) Reservation for Muslims in the services;
(11) Protection of Muslim culture, language, religion and education, personal laws and auqaf;
(12) Proper representation to Muslims in Education Department of the Government;

24. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 120.

25. Shafi's 'Diary'.

(13) No change in the Constitution of India to be brought about without the willing consent of the provinces;
(14) No change in the Constitution of India to be brought about without the willing consent of the Indian States.

The All-Parties Conference had thrown a challenge to Mr M.A. Jinnah asking him to make the Congress agree to the Muslim majorities of even two or three in the legislatures in the two major Muslim-majority provinces so that all could join hands and place a joint demand for independence before the British Government. The Congress leaders refused to agree.

By contemporary accounts the Delhi Conference was the most representative meeting of the Indian Muslims. There was unanimity and an ironic sympathy for Jinnah and his League in the proceedings of the Delhi meeting of Muslim leaders. The resolutions which were adopted unopposed discussed neither independence nor Dominion Status nor the *Nehru Report*. The Aga Khan, the President of the Muslim All-Parties Conference, had contributed two articles to *The Times*, London, on 12 and 13 October 1928, on the subject of a Constitution for India. The views expressed in these articles found an echo in the fourteen points listed above. A remark in the presidential speech of the Aga Khan was significant:

'The Muslims of India are not a community, but, in a special sense, a nation composed of many communities and of a population outnumbering in the aggregate the total even of the pre-war German Empire.'[26]

The Indian National Congress produced a Constitution, the Muslim League offered an alternative Constitution and the Simon Commission was busy preparing yet another. 'Constitutions rain round us like autumn leaves,' wrote Lord Irwin, 'but none that I have seen seemed to be wholly successful in striking the just balance between aspiration and fact. . . . I feel more and more clearly myself that the effective choice of policy is going to be between doing very little and doing something pretty substantial under adequate

26. *The Times of India*, 1 January 1929.

safeguards.'[27]

On 1 January 1929 the Conference of Muslim leaders under the presidency of the Aga Khan adopted by a unanimous resolution a full-scale manifesto of Muslim claims. The *Nehru Report* was flatly repudiated. It was made perfectly clear that the Muslims were determined to retain the rights of representation accorded them under the Act of 1919. The had made up their mind that the Constitution of India must be federal, not unitary as the Congress and Mahasabha insisted. The Congress became steadily more hostile and intransigent. The Simon Commission which was still in India continued to be boycotted. 'Simon, go back,' was a familiar slogan and black-flag demonstrations were a common phenomenon of the scene. The prospects were bleak.

On 20 January 1929, the Viceroy made a carefully worded speech to the Assembly in an effort to conciliate the Congress :

> 'I tell this Assembly again, and through them India, that the declaration of 1917 stands, and will stand for all time as the solemn pledge of the British people to do all that can be done by one people to assist another to attain full national political stature, and that the pledge so given will never be dishonoured. And, as actions are commonly held more powerful than words, I will add that I should not be standing before you here today as Governor-General, if I believed that the British people had withdrawn their hand from that solemn covenant.'[28]

Irwin went home to confer with the British Government. On his return in the autumn of 1929 he made a statement on 31 October 'to break through the webs of mistrust that have lately clogged the relations between India and Great Britain.' Dominion Status was declared to be the goal of Indian reforms. Simon Commission's recommendation, announced Irwin, to hold some kind of a Conference for this purpose had been accepted by the Cabinet. This was a first hint about the Round Table Conference.

27. Irwin to Archbishop of Canterbury, 29 November 1928, HC/18.
28. L.A.D., Vol. I, No. 1, p. 7.

The year 1929 was an extremely difficult year for the Muslims of India. The Muslim League had been split into two and those who refused to follow the lead of Sir Muhammad Shafi when he was 'elected' President preferred to join the Congress. Prominent among such Muslims were T.A.K. Sherwani, Dr S.D. Kitchlew, Ch. Khaliquz Zaman, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Syed Abdullah Brelvi and Dr Syed Mahmud—all prominent workers of the Khilafat who were now deadly enemies of Mohamed Ali for he saw no virtue in joining the Congress which had completely betrayed the Muslims. Abul Kalam Azad, the theoretician of Khilafat, was also in the Congress camp. Early in the year when the Congress started a massive propaganda campaign in favour of the *Nehru Report*, Mohamed Ali advised the Muslims, much like Syed Ahmad Khan in his days, not to attend the Congress meetings. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru charged the former President with waging war on the Congress. Mohamed Ali took Jawaharlal Nehru to task for short memory and reminded him that former Congress Presidents had been allowed to flout with impunity the clearest Congress injunctions in the past. Madan Mohan Malaviya defied the Congress over non-co-operation and led the electoral rebellion of 1926, Motilal Nehru defied the Congress mandate on Delhi Proposals. Was not he, asked Mohamed Ali, entitled to ask the Congress to respect their own resolutions?

The Muslim League, in its Session at Delhi in March 1929, rejected the *Nehru Report* and passed a resolution which contained fourteen basic principles to safeguard the rights and interests of Muslims. The resolution demanded continuance of separate electorate 'till such time as the Muslims chose to abandon it.'

The Congress, on the other hand, adopted a resolution drafted by Gandhi threatening country-wide non-violent non-co-operation campaign, if the *Nehru Report* was not fully implemented before 31 December 1929. The *Nehru Report*, the resolution stated, represented 'the will of the Nation'.

The prospects of Hindu-Muslim unity were indeed bleak. The Congress was in no mood for a compromise.

It was in such an atmosphere of hostility and loneliness that Mohamed Ali lived through 1929—hostility from the Congress, opposition from his erstwhile colleagues of the Khilafat, criticism from the Ulema. Under the circumstances *Hamdard*, the Urdu newspaper which had served for years as a spokesman of the Muslims, became difficult to maintain on a continuing deficit. With its closure in April 1929, Mohamed Ali was left with no means of livelihood. He was heavily in debt, he had to vacate his house which was also the office of *Hamdard*, for arrears of rent had accumulated and the landlord served him with a notice to quit within twenty-four hours. In his old age Mohamed Ali had to be dragged to a civil court. He finally moved to the house of his son-in-law at Rajpur Road and later to a rented house in Qarol Bagh, a suburb of Delhi.

In March 1929, Mohamed Ali went to Burma which was part of India and where the Khilafat movement was still strong. He was accompanied by Dr Zakir Husain as Secretary. Zakir Husain was later to become first the Vice-Chancellor of the Jamia Millia Islamia and then the President of India. During Mohamed Ali's absence in Rangoon fell the Jubilee Celebration of the Maharaja of Alwar. A request was received by the Editor of *Hamdard* for the publication of a jubilee number.

The Editor sought instructions from Mohamed Ali who wired from Rangoon that *Hamdard* could not depart from its principles even though the request came from a man who had so generously financed Mohamed Ali's visit to Europe for medical treatment. No special number was published.

Mohamed Ali had gone to Burma to seek some rest. He had hardly reached there when he was summoned to Delhi within a fortnight because of the deteriorating communal situation in the country.

On his return from Rangoon, Mohamed Ali had to nurse yet another dying daughter. While his daughter was seriously ill he was getting insistent demands from Muslim leaders like Shafi Daudi

and Seth Sulaiman Mitha to appear without delay in Bombay where Muslims had been involved in a riot.[29]

The daughter died of tuberculosis in July. He had buried one in Aligarh in 1924, and at that time while arrangements were being made for the burial he was busy drafting a lengthy telegram to Mustafa Kemal who had abolished the Caliphate; in 1929, he buried another daughter in Delhi and this time he was busy sending instructions about the welfare of Muslims in Bombay. In his bereavement, however, it was not the Indian Muslims but those in South Africa who thought of providing him with some comfort and consolation. They invited him to visit South Africa. Mohamed Ali agreed but arrangements had to be cancelled because the Government of South Africa would not relent on apartheid and Mohamed Ali would not agree to volunteer humiliation in accepting discriminatory treatment which is meted out to all non-whites. The visit was cancelled.

During this period a Hindu member of the Central Assembly, Harblas Sharda. tabled a Bill forbidding early marriage of Hindu girls. This bill was designed for Hindus only but some Muslim members of the House, with the support of a few Muslim religious scholars, started campaigning to extend the scope of the Bill to Muslims. Mohamed Ali considered this an unwarranted act of interference in the internal affairs of Muslims and reacted by organising a campaign against a Hindu seeking to invade the sphere of the personal law of Muslims. He led a deputation to Viceroy on 9 November 1929 and submitted a Memorandum on which he had worked for weeks.[30] Mohamed Ali had to forgo food and sleep in order to type out twenty-five pages of the statement which took him twenty-four hours. The Muslim nation could not produce a typist to do this job. Mohamed Ali went personally to the Viceroy's house on 8 November to deliver an advance copy of the Memo-

29. Abdul Majid Daryabadi, *Diary*, II, 97.
30. See Memorandum on p. 435 of *Writings and Speeches*.

randum to the Private Secretary.[31]

The Memorandum is an eloquent commentary not only on Mohamed Ali's zeal and devotion to the Muslim cause but on his erudite scholarship and knowledge of both the Hindu and the Muslim Law. The Bill had been passed before the deputation met the Viceroy but the deputation demanded that an amending bill excluding Muslims from the operation of the Sarda Act be passed to protect the personal law of Muslims from interference by non-Muslims.

The year 1929 ended with Jawaharlal Nehru presiding over the Session of the Congress in Lahore on 31 December when complete independence, rather than Dominion Status, was declared as its creed, and a resolution of intent to launch a Civil Disobedience movement was passed. The one thing to which Mohamed Ali was committed was complete independence. 'In Madras in 1927,' he recalled, 'we passed a resolution making that our goal. In 1928, in the Convention of All-Parties, the adoption of the Nehru Report Constitution was moved, the very first clause of which was about Dominion Status. Even my old Secretary, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Congress to-day, was kept down by his father. There is a Persian proverb which says : "Be a dog, do not be a younger brother." . . . In the case of Jawaharlal I would say : "Be a cat, do not be the son of your father." For it was his father who, as President of the Congress, throttled poor Jawaharlal at Calcutta in 1928. Well I got up in his place, when he could not speak for complete independence, and I opposed the clause dealing with Dominion Status. But in 1929 I would not go further like Jawaharlal and make it my creed. . . . I liked to keep the door open for negotiations.'[32]

31. Mohamed Ali to Abdul Majid Daryabadi, 11 April 1930 (Abdul Majid Daryabadi, op. cit., II, 125).

32. *Writings and Speeches*, pp. 461-62.

Chapter Fourteen

THE LAST YEAR OF LIFE

[1930–1931]

Stand against Civil Disobedience Movement—Recommendations of Simon Report—Lord Irwin's Recommendations: Government of India's Despatch—Mohamed Ali's Interview with Lord Irwin—Serious Illness—Hospitalised in Simla—Acceptance of Viceroy's Invitation to Attend Round Table Conference—The Odds against Mohamed Ali—Speech at the Round Table Conference—Iqbal's Address to the Muslim League at Allahabad—Mohamed Ali's Letter to the Prime Minister of England—The Last Day—Some Tributes—Burial in Jerusalem

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In 1930, Mohamed Ali was the President of the Khilafat Committee which was openly at war with the National Congress. All the old comrades of Khilafat—Abul Kalam Azad, Dr Ansari, Majid Khwajah, Khaliquz Zaman, Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew—were in the Congress camp. The few that had not deserted could be counted on the finger tips of a hand. The entire 'Nationalist' press including *Al-Jamiat*, the organ of the Muslim religious scholars of India. *Inqilab* of Lahore was one of the few dailies which still supported him. Mohamed Ali was running the Khilafat organisation single-handed. He did not have even a typist. A letter he wrote to Tej Bahadur Sapru in January took him six hours to type, and that too at a time when the doctors had completely forbidden him to read and write. The blood vessels of his right eye had burst and he was already blind in one eye. The danger was that he would lose the other. His blood pressure had shot up to 170. The doctors had warned him of haemorrhage of the brain if he did not desist from his activities. His diabetes had deteriorated. His feet were swollen and his hands trembled as he wrote. Financially he had

touched rock bottom. But there was no rest for Mohamed Ali.

This sick man of fifty-two divined that the people had begun to respond once again to the Khilafat Committee. This provided him with a cause to live. The Muslim All-Parties Conference was conscious of the power that he still wielded with the Muslim masses who were clearly disgusted with the Congress. But the 'leaders' took him as a spent force. Seeing his poverty they spread a rumour that he was about to seek office in the Government. The Speakership of the Legislative Assembly was mentioned and, ridiculously enough, it was also stated that he was about to accept the job of a Registrar in the Aligarh University. Any stick was good enough to beat him with, but they were hitting below the belt. Understandably Mohamed Ali was irritated at this continuing campaign of calumny. He hit back hard, and this time he did not spare the use of invective his enemies were employing. He was paying them back in the same coin. He had little energy to spare and so much of it was being wasted in this negative pursuit. The statements against him were too many to be contradicted. Mohamed Ali was not even reading them—his failing eyesight was a blessing in this respect for he was spared the provocation of the endless attacks. The fight was uneven, for how could one person, even though he were in the best of health, contain the combined attack of the Congress, the British Government and their Muslim henchmen ?

But Mohamed Ali had not learnt to give up.

Early in 1930 Sir Tij Bahadur Sapru, a Hindu liberal, sought a communal settlement on the basis of joint electorates. In this work Mohamed Ali fully co-operated along with others of the Muslim Conference. But as soon as the preliminaries were over the Hindu Mahasabha dissociated itself.[1]

Sapru had failed to persuade the Congress to participate in the forthcoming Round Table Conference. Now he failed to per-

1. S.P. See Dr B.S. Moonje to Sapru, 26 January and 5 May 1930. Jayakar to Sapru, 23 and 26 January 1930.

suade the Mahasabha. Sapru was pleased with the Muslim response but his own co-religionists were wrecking yet another chance of getting the Muslims to give up separate electorates. Sapru was bitter.[2]

Mohamed Ali was willing to surrender separate electorates, if only the Muslims were guaranteed effective political control in the majority provinces of Bengal, Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P. But the Hindus would concede neither separate electorates nor territorial majority. This was an impossible situation. Not unnaturally Mohamed Ali's concern for the political future of Muslims increased with the growing intransigence of the majority.[3]

The Congress stepped up its pressure on the Government, but with the failure to bring about a settlement with Muslims the united front against the Simon Commission broke down. Wrote Irwin in April 1930 :

> 'The closer we get to the Constitutional revision the more aloof Moslems and Hindus seem to draw from one another. One of the Bengal Ghaznavis, who is in the Assembly, came to see me a day or two ago and showed me a pamphlet that he and the Ali Brothers had produced and were distributing broadcast in condemnation of Gandhi's movement. This they intend to supplement by a campaign throughout India against him.'[4]

At its session at Lahore at the end of 1929 the Congress had authorised the Working Committee to start another civil disobedience movement as and when it might deem fit. In April 1930 the campaign was launched under Gandhi's personal command. A dramatic 'march to the sea' in order to extract its salt in violation of the Government's monopoly was followed by widespread attempts to defy authority. What irked Mohamed Ali most at this

2. See Sapru to Graham Pole, 9 January 1930 ; Sapru to C.I. Ramaswami Iyer, 14, 21, 23, 24 January 1930 ; Sapru to Mrs Annie Besant, 24 January 1930.

3. Irwin to Wedgwood Benn, 14 May 1930 with Irwin's note of interview with Mohamed Ali on 12 May 1930.

4. Irwin to Wedgwood Benn, 7 April 1930.

time was Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement. It was an insult added to injury. His Salt Campaign was rubbing salt into Muslim wounds (یہ نمک سازی کرے اور وہ نمک پاشی کرے!). He warned that Gandhi's movement was not a movement for complete independence of India but for making seventy millions of Indian Muslims dependants of Hindu Mahasabha.[5]

The Information Secretary of the Government of India, G.S. Bajpai (later Sir Grija Shankar Bajpai), analysed the situation :

'All sections of Muslims are enthusiastic in their support of the conference and strongly opposed to civil disobedience. Mr. Jinnah, Mr. A.H. Ghuznavi, M.L.A., Maulvi Mohamed Yakub, M.L.A., Sir Muhammad Shafi, Maulana Muhammad Ali and several other Muhammadan leaders have unequivocally condemned civil disobedience. Muhammadans have also expressed their views on the public platform. It is no small tribute to the work of their leaders that throughout the troubles of the civil disobedience movement Muhammadans have on the whole kept aloof. The task of Muhammadan leaders has been rendered easier by the fact that their differences lie more with the Hindu community than with the Government.'[6]

In May 1930 the *Simon Report* was published. As against less than three months in which the Nehru Committee produced a report, the Simon Commission took two years to complete its work. Their inquiry covered 'the working of the system of Government' as a whole. It considered that the future framework of India's Constitution could not be of a unitary type ; it must be federal. It recommended that dyarchy should lapse in the Provinces which should be entrusted to Ministers responsible to the legislatures. 'Each province should as far as possible be mistress in her own house.'[7]

The immediate adoption of adult suffrage, recommended in the *Nehru Report*, was declared to be impracticable.[8]

In the Central Executive no substantial change was recom-

5. R. Coupland, *India: A Re-Statement* (London, 1945), p. 136.
6. Enclosure of Irwin to Wedgwood Benn, 14 May 1930.
7. *Simon Report*, II, 16.
8. Ibid., II, 91.

mended.

The *Simon Report* declared that Hindu-Muslim tension had not been lessened, but had been increased, by the operation of the Act of 1919. It pointed out that the continuance of separate electorates was an open denial of the existence of a common civic spirit in the two communities. It is noted also that the determination of the great majority of Muslims to retain separate electorates was stiffer than before.[9]

In a spirit of uneasiness and disapproval, the Commission acquisced: 'No third party, however friendly and disinterested, can do what the two communities might cooperate in doing for themselves by mutual agreement.'[10]

The *Report* repeatedly threw doubts on the suitability of a parliamentary form of Government for India. 'The British Parliamentary system has developed in accordance with the day-to-day needs of the people, and has been fitted like a well-worn garment to the figure of the wearer, but it does not follow that it will suit everybody.'[11] British parliamentarism in India is a translation and in even the best translation the essential meaning is apt to be lost.[12]

'It is not a perfect instrument of democratic government finished and complete. It is a living organism which even to-day is being insensibly modified in accordance with the changing conditions of the times. Its supreme merit is just this adaptability. Many countries have attempted to embody its principles in written instruments, but in the result something entirely different has emerged. The British system is not an easy one to imitate, for its success depends on a number of factors which cannot be introduced into the provisions of a statute. In other countries, where a system of shifting groups obtains, the constitutional position of the Government is in effect quite different from that of the Cabinet in the British system. It will, we think, be some time before it is possible to judge how far it is likely that the party system obtaining in Britain will reproduce itself in the Provincial legislatures. It may be that a system of groups may be found to be more con-

9. Ibid., II, 96.
10. Ibid., II, 63.
11. Ibid., II, 6.
12. Ibid., II, 7.

sonant with Indian ideas. . . . It seems to us most unlikely that if Britain had been the size of India, if communal and religious divisions so largely governed its politics, and if minorities had had as little confidence in the rule of others as they have in India, popular government in Britain would have taken this form.'[13]

The Simon Commission endorsed a number of Muslim demands such as separate electorates and the separation of Sind from Bombay, but it turned down the concept of territorial majority, for the prospect of creating a Muhammadan *bloc* in Northern India appeared to Simon an 'alarming one'.[14]

One of the members of the Commission wrote:

'As to Moslem complaint, you must remember that our report was an agreed one. We had grea difficulty in getting our Labour colleagues to recommend communal electorates at all. It was only by conceding the Punjab and Bengal point against the Moslems that we got them to agree to communal electorates and weightage for Moslems elsewhere.'[15]

Irwing was not quite happy with the *Simon Report*. Against the advice of his intimate friend Dawson,[16] he set about to frame his own recommendations in the lengthy Government of India's despatch.

He deviated from the *Simon Report* and recommended Indian responsibility at the Centre, although the Provincial Governors and Members of his own Council did not agree with him on this issue.[17]

In May when the *Simon Report* was published Mohamed Ali gave away his youngest daughter Gulnar in marriage to Shuaib Qureshi, a trusted colleague. In the same month died Nawab Hamid Ali Khan, the ruler of Rampur, who had banned Mohamed Ali's entry into the State. He had not yielded to the entreaties of

13. Ibid., II, 147.
14. See Enclosure of Simon to Stanley Baldwin, 19 April 1928.
15. George R. Lane-Fox, 2 August 1930, HC/19.
16. See Geoffrey Dawson to Irwin, 27 May 1930, ibid.
17. Secret Proceedings of the Governors' Conference held at Simla on 21 July 1930; see also Hailey's note dated 28 July 1930, HY C/19.

his brother prince, the Maharaja of Alwar, to lift the ban with the result that during his reign Mohamed Ali was exiled from his home. The railway station of Rampur was British territory. When Mohamed Ali received news of the death of his daughter's son in Rampur he could go only to the railway station in the hope of seeing the dead body of his grandson who had, however, been buried before Mohamed Ali reached the railway station. Even in an hour such as this the Nawab of Rampur refused to relent. The death of such a remorseless tyrant was no occassion for mourning, but Mohamed Ali readily forgot and forgave and went to Rampur to assure the new Nawab of his loyalty to the State of his birth.

Mohamed Ali had a long interview with Irwin on 12 May. This is what Irwin wrote to Wedgwood Benn, the Secretary of State for India :[18]

'I had a long talk today with Mohamed Ali, who came to see me. He was in very voluble vein, but three principal points emerged from his flow of conversation :

'(1) Peshawar.[19] He thought the whole proceedings had been very regrettable, as they had inevitably disturbed Moslem feeling that he was doing his utmost to keep out of the Civil Disobedience Movement. He ascribed the present state of feeling in Peshawar to two causes :

'(*a*) the immediate incidents of the 23rd April, in the course of which, he said, many innocent people had been run over by armoured cars, which had fired the feeling of the mob ;

'(*b*) general dissatisfaction about the reluctance of Government to grant political reforms.

'(2) He told me that he was going to Bombay to the Sapru-Patro Conference. The Hindu Mahasabha were playing a waiting game in the anticipation that the Simon Report would be unfavourable to Moslems, and then they (the Hindus) could squeeze them (the Moslems) better than now. He somewhat surprised me by saying that he was not in favour of communal electorates. He wanted general electorates with reserved seats, subject to the

18. Irwin to Wedgwood Benn, MSS. Eur., Vol. V.

19. On 23 April 1930 British troops opened fire on a mob in Qissa Khwani, the main street of Peshawar, killing a large number of people.

condition that no one should be elected who could not poll a third of the votes of his own community and a fifth of the votes of the other community. This he thought would be much more favourable to Moslems than a system of communal electorates. He admitted that this was not the present view of the nominal leaders of the Moslem movement, but said that they were not really in touch with the Moslem man in the street as he was.

'(3) He asked me whether, if the Civil Disobedience Movement were called off, Government would be prepared to remit the sentences passed upon those convicted for breaches of the law during its course or in consequence of it, and in short whether we could return to the position of December 29th. He exscepted of course crimes of violence.

'I told him that it was quite impossible for me or for any Government to bargain with a movement of the present kind and that, as far as I was concerned, it was impossible to do or to think of anything until the movement was either called off, fizzled out, or was definitely beaten. He agreed to this, but said: "if that happened, what then?" I told him in reply to this that so far as I was concerned, if and when that state of affairs had been reached, I should certainly be prepared to do what I could to get sentences that had been passed in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement sympathetically considered; but I emphasised to him again that it was no part of my intention to strike bargains, and that I was not able to consider as a practical proposition something that, so far as I was concerned, would only come into consideration when the present movement had definitely terminated.

'He then asked me whether it was possible to make any statement about the work of the Conference being to discuss Dominion Status. I told him that, so far as I was concerned, I should not be in favour of making any further statement beyond that which I had made before to the effect that it would be open to any of those attending the Conference to advocate any scheme of Dominion Status that they desired to recommend, and to invite the Conference to examine how best the practical difficulties inherent in any such scheme might be surmounted. With this statement he appeared satisfied.'

It is June 1930. Mohamed Ali is now in Simla in a British hospital. He occupied a room between two fiancés, a lady on one side and a military officer on the other. The lady asked his doctor, 'What is this old man ailing from?' The doctor said: 'Ask me rather what the old man is not ailing from!' And he was right.

The old man had a dilated heart, recurrent blindness through retinitis in both eyes one of which could yet be saved ; his one foot was gangrened with neuritis and the other was swollen through oedema. He was suffering through chronic diabetes with albuminaria. In brief, he was a dying man. The Viceroy sent him his personal physician. Through sheer will power the patient recovered enough to be able to move about. From Simla he went to Bhopal where the ruler, an old admirer, converted his guest house into a hospital for him. By August he had lost an eye, his blood pressure was high and he found great difficulty in breathing. His basic malady remained uncured. He was not able to read or write, nor could he move about. At this stage an invitation came from the Viceroy to attend the Round Table Conference in London. No sane man in this state of health would have travelled seven miles but Mohamed Ali agreed to travel seven thousand miles of land and sea because where India and Islam were concerned he was a man possessed. The 'nationalist' press dubbed him a traitor. 'I consider it my religious duty,' he wrote to a friend in September from Bhopal, 'that I should go to the Conference and proclaim the truth both to the tyrannical ruler and the misguided subjects and that in waging this noblest of *jihads* I should lay down my life. I am, therefore, to beg or borrow some three to four thousand rupees in order to take my wife along. She has been my companion in all the stages of life and I wish that she should be present while I embark on my last journey to the destined goal.'[20] He had obviously a dreadful premonition of what must come.

Accepting the Viceroy's invitation to attend the Round Table Conference, Mohamed Ali wrote to Lord Irwin from Bhopal:

'I thank you for kindly conveying to me the invitation of His Majesty's Government to the Round Table Conference which is to meet for the solution of the constitutional problem of India.

'Believing as I did in the freedom of every person, community and country as their birth-right I was naturally greatly dissatisfied

20. Abdul Majid Daryabadi, *Diary*, II, 156.

with the denial of this right through the system of Government which had been established in India and sought like those associated with me to win back our freedom if possible with the British connection and if necessary without it.

'The bitter experience of the past led us to conclude that the representatives of the British nation and the officials employed in India did not really intend to restore to us our birth-right, and three years ago we resolved to win back freedom and made complete independence our goal.

'However, Your Excellencey's visit to England last year and the announcement which you made on your return gave us hope once more that our freedom could be won while still retaining the British connection. Although there had been symptoms indicating that no Government would retain the confidence of the politically-minded people in Britain if it resolved to do justice to India and restored to us our birth-right of freedom, I most gratefully acknowledge, if I may say so, that I have been deeply impressed by your personal desire to be just and fair to us and there have been other indications also that you have been able at last to induce some others as well in your country to share your goodwill towards us and your righteous intentions.

'Therefore, I resolved with many of my associates not to slam the door of negotiations that Your Excellency's statement of 31st October, 1929, had opened and we are still adhering to that resolution. In fact it was our efforts that saved the Mussalmans from being misled into joining the present civil disobedience movement.

'While I deny the right of any but Indians themselves to shape their destiny, I am not only willing but anxious to proceed to England, along with other representatives of Indian communities, parties and interests, to confer with the representatives of Great Britain and persuade them to recognise India's natural demand for self-determination.

'I do not yet know authoritatively who will be the other delegates from India which the Government has selected. But I trust that all India including my own community would be truly represented and, with this confidence, I gratefully accept the very kind invitation of His Majesty's Government.

'I trust I shall be able to assist the Conference in understanding the full connotation of the word "self" in the expression self-determination and that an agreed scheme of constitution for a responsible government for a free India would be framed as the result of our labours in which, while we rid ourselves of the foreign incubus that has troubled us so long, we shall not create for ourselves a home-made incubus of certain small monopolist castes and interests pretending to speak in the name of the majority

in India and claiming to control the affairs and destinies of the entire Indian nation.

'As Your Excellency is probably aware I am not really in a fit condition to undertake so long a journey to a cold country at a time when its climate would be far from agreeable and to do constant work from day to day some of which would no doubt produce at times excitement most dangerous to one like myself suffering from a dilated heart, and practically still confined to bed. My left eye had become hopelessly blind some time ago and now the right eye too is so seriously affected that reading and writing are impossible and any further strain may make me completely blind. But, when so serious an attempt is to be made to shape the destinies of my country and my community, I cannot re ist the yearning of my heart to deliver to those attempting this task the message with which I feel I have been charged, and it is only on this account that I hope to proceed to London along with my wife and brother in spite of the obvious danger that every doctor has told me I shall be running. I hope even a sick man's labours may prove of some slight use.'[21]

Mohamed Ali knew that he had to fight on three fronts: the British, the Hindu and the Muslim delegates at the Conference; and he knew also that the doctors had firmly told him that any intense intellectual activity at this stage of his ailment would mean certain death through brain haemorrhage. In complete defiance of sound medical advice Mohamed Ali decided to court death. The boat 'Viceroy of India' sailed in mid-October and Mohamed Ali boarded it on a stretcher. Black flags were flown to wish him God-speed and his erstwhile comrades prayed that the boat 'might prove very unseaworthy'.[22] His condition deteriorated on the way. He stayed in Paris. His blood pressure had shot up to 190, he developed high temperature, his liver was painfully dilated, the nausea was constant and appetite had completely disappeared. An old Turk friend, now a doctor in exile in Paris, Behjat Wahbi, nursed Mohamed Ali with great love and devotion. But at home the news of his sudden relapse was received more with glee than

21. Mohamed Ali to Irwin, 11 September 1930. MSS Eur C 152/25, No. 618 b, India Office Library.

22. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 457.

concern. The depth to which political opposition had sunk can be imagined by the following note in the *Zamindar* of Lahore, whose editor-proprietor, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, was one of the leading lights of the Khilafat movement:

'It is a pity that the quest of laurels which led the Maulana to forgo his principles will not succeed for he will not be able to avail himself of this opportunity. . . . We pray to God that the Maulana should be restored to health so that the desire which has led him in his old age to prostrate himself at the threshold of his British masters, is fulfilled.'[23]

From what was virtually his death-bed in Paris Mohamed Ali wrote a letter to his daughter on 6 November 1930. Talking of his mission he said : 'Success in any case is extremely difficult. . . . I wish to God that the Mahasabha mentality changes after their crossing the sea, and the Indians develop a proper perspective of their slavery, and, instead of attempting to enslave each other, they combine together to banish slavery (from the country). May God grant both Hindus and Muslims an opportunity of mutual justice, fairplay and tolerance, and may they become so thoroughly disgusted with slavery that they should not tolerate to become the slaves of any one nor should they seek to make any one their slave.'[24]

Mohamed Ali recovered a little in Paris and reached London in the middle of November. All the delegations were already there. The Aga Khan was the leader of the Muslim delegation in whose selection Fazl-i-Husain, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, had a hand. The initial lead at the Conference was still held by Shafi and Jinnah. They were negotiating the federal idea, which the Muslim League had propounded since its revival in 1924, with the Hindu leaders through the Hindu liberals. Shafi reported to the Viceroy on 7 November 1930:

'Almost all the Delegates from India to the Round Table

23. Quoted in Abdul Majid Daryabadi, op. cit., II, 161.
24. Ibid., II, 173.

Conference are now assembled, and various groups are holding meetings preparatory to the Conference itself. The Muslim Delegates from British India have had two meetings and have come to unanimous decisions. They have appointed His Highness the Aga Khan, Mr. Jinnah and myself as their representatives to discuss the problems we have to face with the Hindu representatives, and the atmosphere seems to be somewhat favourable to an understanding being arrived at. I do hope that a Hindu-Muslim agreement will be concluded on the right lines. If this is brought about, our task at the Round Table Conference will be simplified, and the prospects of a successful conclusion of the deliberations at the Conference will become brighter. I pray that all parties—British and Indian—may realise the seriousness of the situation and, a satisfactory solution having been arrived at, the Conference may be a landmark in the history of India.'[25]

There was hope in the air. The Aga Khan told the Secretary of State that within a short time there would be an agreement on the communal question.[26]

On 15 November, the Aga Khan and Sapru denied that serious communal differences existed amongst the members of the Indian delegation.[27] But the differences were deep and the suspicion deeper still. Muslims were willing to compromise on joint electorates but they were firm on the principle of territorial majority in the Muslim provinces. The gulf was widening between the Hindu and the Muslim delegates. Every communication that Irwin received told a sorry tale.[28]

Speaking on 19 November at the fourth plenary session of the R.T.C. Mohamed Ali lost no time in delcaring the one purpose for which he had gone to London. 'I want to go back to my country,' he said, 'if I can go back with the substance of freedom in my hand. Otherwise I will not go back to a slave country. I would even prefer to die in a foreign country so long as it is a

25. Sir Muhammad Shafi to Irwin, 7 Novemher 1930, HC/19.

26. Wedgwood Benn to Irwin, 24 November 1930, HC/6.

27. *The Times*, 17 November 1930.

28. Wedgwood Benn to Irwin, 29 November, 11, 15, 22, 26 December, 1930, 4, 12, 15 January 1931; Hailey to Irwin, 14, 20, 28 November 1930; 12 and 20 January 1931, HC/19.

free country, and if you do not give us freedom in India you will have to give me a grave here.'[29]

While paying a tribute to Lord Irwin, he dubbed the Government of India's despatch as 'a most disappointing document'. He disclosed that before coming to London he tried his hand, along with Sapru, in peace-making between the Viceroy and Gandhi, but had failed.

Mohamed Ali stood for maintaining the British connection but he warned: 'If we go back to India without the birth of a new Dominion we shall go back . . . to a lost Dominion.'[30]

'. . . The Hindu-Muslim problem,' he said, '. . . is of your [British] creation. But not altogether. It is the old maxim of "divide and rule." But there is division of labour there. *We* divide and *you* rule.'[31]

Elaborating the Muslim position in India, Mohamed Ali said:

> 'I have a culture, a polity, an outlook on life—a complete synthesis which is Islam. Where God commands I am a Muslim first, a Muslim second, and a Muslim last, and nothing but a Muslim. If you ask me to enter into your Empire or into your Nation by leaving that synthesis, that polity, that culture, that ethics, I will not do it. My first duty is to my Maker, not to H.M. the King, nor to my companion Dr. Moonje; my first duty is to my Maker, and that is the case with Dr. Moonje also. He must be a Hindu first, and I must be a Muslim first, so far as that duty is concerned. But where India is concerned, where India's freedom is concerned, where the welfare of India is concerned, I am an Indian first, an Indian second, an Indian last, and nothing but an Indian.
>
> 'I belong to two circles of equal size, but which are not concentric. One is India, and the other is the Muslim world. When I came to England in 1920 at the head of the Khilafat Delegation, my friends said: "You must have some sort of a crest for your stationery." I decided to have it with two circles on it. In one circle was the word "India"; in the other circle was Islam, with the word "Khilafat". We as Indian Muslims came in both

29. *Writings and Speeches*, p. 460.
30. Ibid., p. 462.
31. Ibid., p. 464.

circles. We belong to these two circles, each of more than 300 millions, and we can leave neither. We are not nationalists but supernationalists, and I as a Muslim say that "God made man and the Devil made the nation." Nationalism divides; our religion binds. No religious wars, no crusades, have seen such holocausts and have been so cruel as your last war, and that was a war of your nationalism, and not my *Jehad*.'[32]

The Hindu-Muslim problem, said Mohamed Ali, was founded on the fear of domination. The fear is best removed by conceding the principle of territorial majority of the provinces. 'That gives us our safeguard, for we demand hostages as we have willingly given hostages to Hindus in the other Provinces where they form huge majorities.'[33]

He made the point that for the first time in the history of India the principle of majority rule was being introduced. Muslims were prepared to submit to majority rule but only in a federation in which their interests were safeguarded and not under a unitary form of Government in which they would be trampled under foot by the sheer weight of numbers.

The Round Table Conference continued but a solution of the communal problem was no nearer than when it began. The Muslim delegation went to the farthest limit to accommodate the Hindus but the liberal elements among them were overruled by the militants.

Sir Chimanlal Setalvad recalls the spirit of these negotiations: 'Sapru, Sastri and myself would have agreed immediately to these demands and secured joint electorates. We were, however, seriously disappointed in the attitude of Jayakar and Moonje. We first took up the question of Sind being made a separate province. Jayakar and Moonje brought forward various conditions which in their view should be fulfilled before Sind could be a separate province. We occupied several evenings on this one question alone.'[34] On his side, the Aga Khan records, 'I am certain that Sapru and Sastri, in their heart of hearts, wanted to accept our Muslim proposals,

32. Ibid., p. 465.
33. Ibid., p. 466.
34. G. Allana, *Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah*, p. 230.

but that they were afraid of their Hindu colleagues and, above all, of the influence of the Mahasabha.'

Setalvad admits, 'A great opportunity was thus lost. If Sapru and myself could have helped it, we would have at once conceded the demands of the Aga Khan and made him and other Muslim representatives sign for joint electorates. If this had happened, the subsequent political history of India would have taken a different turn.'[35]

The discussions dragged on until the end of the year. On 29 December 1930 Iqbal was echoing Mohamed Ali's sentiments, and indeed the sentiments of all Muslims in India, when he delivered the Presidential Address to the Muslim League at Allahabad. He said:

'The political bondage of India has been and is a source of infinite misery to the whole of Asia. It has suppressed the spirit of the East and wholly deprived her of that joy of self-expression which once made her the creator of a great and glorious culture.

'. . . Let me tell you frankly that, at the present moment, the Muslims of India are suffering from two evils. The first is the want of personalities. Sir Malcolm Hailey and Lord Irwin were perfectly correct in their diagnosis when they told the Aligarh University that the community had failed to produce leaders. By leaders I mean men who, by divine gift or experience, possess a keen perception of the trend of modern history. Such men are really the driving forces of a people, but they are God's gift and cannot be made to order. The second evil from which the Muslims of India are suffering is that the community is fast losing what is called the herd instinct. This makes it possible for individuals and groups to start independent careers without contributing to the general thought and activity of the community.

'We are 70 millions and far more homogeneous than any other people in India. Indeed the Muslims of India are the only Indian people who can fitly be described as a nation in the modern sense of the word The Hindus, though ahead of us in almost all respects, have not yet been able to achieve the kind of homogeneity which is necessary for a nation, and which Islam has given you as a free gift.

'. . . the Prime Minister of England apparently refuses to see that the problem of India is international and not national. . . .

35. Ibid.

Obviously he does not see that the model of British democracy cannot be of any use in a land of many nations; and that a system of separate electorates is only a poor substitute for a territorial solution of the problem.

'. . . it is clear that in view of India's infinite variery in climates, races, languages, creeds and social systems, the creation of autonomous states based on the unity of language, race, history, religion and identity of economic interests, is the only possible way to secure a stable constitutional structure in India.'[36]

There is no evidence to suggest that Mohamed Ali read this address before he dictated his fateful letter to the Prime Minister of Great Britain on 3 January 1931.

The New-Year Day of 1931 saw Mohamed Ali exhausted and confined to his bed in the Hyde Park Hotel, London, a stone's throw from the present Pakistan Embassy in Lowndes Square. The work and the worry through which he had been passing had nearly killed him. On 19 December he had fallen unconscious and remained so for more than twenty-four hours. His desire for doing the work which had taken him to London was so great that he invited the Lord Chancellor to breakfast at 8 o'clock that *evening* believing it to be the morning. But he insisted even in this condition to dictate a letter to the Prime Minister, Mr Ramsay Macdonald, placing his views on the Muslim position on record. On Saturday, 3 January, he dictated a note in which he said : '. . . it is a misnomer to call the Hindu-Muslim question a question of minorities. . . . A community . . . numbering more than 70 millions cannot easily be called a minority in the sense of Geneva minorities. . . .' The plain fact is that the Muslims ruled India for a thousand years and the Hindus were determined to rule India in the spirit of *revanche*. This would mean replacing the 'nation of shopkeepers,' that were the British, by their Indian conterpart, the *bania*. 'I do not wish to create a home-made incubus of a caste of shopkeepers of our own,' he said.[37]

36. "Shamloo," *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*.
37. *Writings and Speeches*, pp. 473-76.

The real problem was to give full power to Muslims in such provinces in which they are in majority and to Hindus in such provinces in which they were in a majority and provide for adequate protection to minorities at the same time. Mohamed Ali devised a plan. 'Let the seats,' he recommended, 'be reserved for the two communities but no candidate be declared elected unless he secures (1) at least 40 per cent of votes cast of his own community, (2) at least 5 per cent of votes cast of the other community wherever he is in a minority or 10 or less per cent and 10 per cent where he is in a larger minority or in a majority.'[38]

The same day, Mohamed Ali had an hour's discussion in the morning on the North-West Frontier problem with Nawab Abdul Qayyum, a fellow-delegate to the Round Table Conference. He discussed the separation of Sind from Bombay for an hour and a half with Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto. In the afternoon he had a meeting lasting two hours with Begum Abdul Aziz of Lahore on the rights of Muslim women. He then dictated for three hours a letter to the Prime Minister containing his views on the Indian situation. This was the last straw. The effort cost him his life.

By 5 p.m. on Saturday, 3 January, Mohamed Ali was completely exhausted. He retired to rest. When he woke up after two hours he could not speak. The doctor was sent for. By 11 p.m. he pronounced the case hopeless. It was haemorrhage of the brain. The right side of his body was paralysed. At 9.30 next day Mohamed Ali breathed his last.

Everything he said about being a dying man had come literally true. Now the question was: Would he go back to a slave country?

The Secretary of State who was in his country house for the week-end came up and left cards on Begum Mohamed Ali. In the evening he attended, with the Lord Chancellor, the funeral service of Mohamed Ali, and wrote to Shaukat Ali, who was in London, saying that the British Government should desire to bear the

38. Ibid. p. 483.

expenses of the funeral.[39]

But this was not necessary.

The Nawab of Bhopal took over the whole matter. At first there was some difficulty about the superstition of sailors in carrying a corpse and it was contemplated that the body would be secretly conveyed to India as merchandise. Later, however, it was decided, at the pressing request of the Muslim world, that the body should be buried in Jerusalem. It could be transported by train and the difficulty raised by the sailors was solved.[40]

Reported the *Times*, London, on 6 January 1931:

'The funeral prayers for Muhammad Ali who died on Sunday morning, 4th January 1931, were said at Paddington Town Hall at 6.00 p.m. on Monday 5th January. The Prime Minister was represented by Mr. S.K. Brown.

'The Federation Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference met on the 5th January where Lord Sankey, President of the Sub-Committee, said : "He was a well loved leader, who, both by thought and action, endeavoured to advance the policy which he thought best. It is pathetic to remember that he has passed away far from his home, in a last endeavour to serve his fellow countrymen by word and deed. It was my privilege to visit him, at his request, on his death bed. He was in a state of great weakness and great weariness, but he had no thought for himself; his hopes, his wishes, and his ambitions were first and last all the time for India. To many of us round this table he will be recollected as a fellow-member of the University of Oxford who lived and suffered for his ideals."

'Lord Reading said : "The vivid and forceful personality of Maulana Muhammad Ali never came into personal contact with me until I met him in this country. I knew of his existence and, of course, of the great strength with which he gave expression to his conviction in India, which no doubt occasionally caused us trouble; but at the moment our thoughts are filled with admiration for the courage of the man, who insisted, notwithstanding the very serious state of his health, on coming to this country in order that he might take part in the struggle for the constitutional advance of his motherland, and who has, at any rate, had the consolation of dying in the struggle for a great cause, in which he had implicit faith."

39. Wedgwood Benn to Viceroy, dated 4 January 1931, No. 50.
40. Ibid.

'Lord Peel said : "It is only necessary for me to say now how deeply we admire the courage which made him forget and pass over his very grave physical disabilities and to come over here to take a manful part in this Conference, which was, of course, of such deep interest to him and is of such interest to his fellow countrymen."

'The members of the Sub-Committee stood for a few moments in silence.

'Mr Picton-Turbeivill, M.P., said: "I had the pleasure of meeting the late Maulana Muhammed Ali at the Mansion House on Lor d Mayor's day. During a long conversation he told me of his past struggles with the British Government, and of his imprisonment, and ended by saying 'but now I have come over with the olive branch in my hand'. He knew in all probability he would never again see his native land. His own action in coming to the Conference at so great a sacrifice and in such a spirit cannot but contribute largely to its success, and in creating that better understanding so greatly desired by all men and women of goodwill."

'Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru said: "We who knew him know how much there was lovable in his personality and his character. I think all will be agreed as to the very fine spirit he showed, of which all Indians can be proud, in his travelling all this distance to take part in this important conference at this critical juncture in the history of our country. . . ."

'The Secretary of State for India rounded up the string of tributes: "Mohamed Ali courted death knowing that he was a dying man, he gladly crossed the world in the service of India. In the last day of the old year, in defiance of his doctor's orders, he entertained a score of guests, and addressed them from what we now know was his deathbed. He earnestly pleaded for a wider liberty and better understanding. A great Musulman, a great patriot, a great prophet of humanity, he deliberately gave his life in the cause of reconciliation."

Wedgwood Benn wrote Mohamed Ali's obituary notice in the *Times*.

On 24 January 1931, the body arrived in Jerusalem by train from Port Said accompanied by Shaukat Ali and many Egyptian notables. From early morning dense crowds from neighbouring villages poured into Jerusalem as a result of the Mufti's proclamation and invitation to all Arabs to attend the funeral of 'Islam's most self-sacrificing patriot and Palestine's greatest friend in need'. The coffin was met at the station by representatives of Muslim

institutions and by officials sent by neighbouring Muslim Governments. All the Consuls and many local notables met the procession at the entrance to the walled city.

From the station the procession passed throught dense crowds until it reached the Damascus Gate, where the crowd dispersed, leaving room for the procession to enter the narrow alleys of the walled city towards Harem-e-Sharif, where the crowd reassembled for the Friday prayers. Here speeches were made and poems recited in honour of Mohamed Ali.

In a stirring poem the famous Egyptian poet Shawqi Dayf said :

مولانا محمد علی

بيتٌ على أرض الهدى وسمائه — الحقّ حائطه وأسّ بنائه

الفتح من أعلامه والطهر من — أوصافه والقدس من أسمائه

تحنو مناكبه على شعب الهدى — وتظلّ سدّته على سينائه

من ذا ينازعنا مقالد بابه — وجلال سدّته وطهر فنائه

ومحمدٌ صلّى على جنباته — واستقبل السمحات في أرجائه

واليوم ضمّ الناس مأتم أرضه — وحوى الملائك مهرجان سمائه

يا قدس هيّ من رياضك ربوةٌ — لنزيل تربك واحتفل بلقائه

هو من سيوف الله جلّ جلاله — أو من سيوف الهند عند قضائه

فتح النبيّ له مناخ براقه — ومعارج التشريف من إسرائه

بطلٌ حقوق الشرق من أحماله — وقضيّة الإسلام من أعبائه

له يعني بيت المقدس. — له اي مولانا محمد علی.

لَمْ تَنْسَهُ الْهِنْدُ الْعَزِيزَةُ رِقَّةً   للشَّرقِ أَو سَهَرًا عَلَى أَشْيَائِهِ
وَقِبَابُهِ نَسْجُ الْهُنُودِ فَهَلْ تَرَى   دَفَنُوا الزَّعِيمَ مُكَفَّنًا بِقِبَابِهِ
اَلنِّيلُ يَذْكُرُ فِي الْحَوَادِثِ صَوْتَهُ   وَالتُّرْكُ لَا يَنْسَوْنَ صِدْقَ بَلَائِهِ
قُلْ لِلزَّعِيمِ مُحَمَّدٍ نَزَلَ الأَسَى   (بالنيل) و استولى عَلَى بَطْحَائِهِ
فَمَشَى إِلَيْكَ بِجَفْنِهِ وَ بِدَمْعِهِ   وَإِلَى أَخِيكَ[٣] بِقَلْبِهِ وَ عَزَائِهِ
إِجْتَزْتَهُ فَحَوَاكَ فِي أَطْرَافِهِ   وَلَوِ انْتَظَرْتَ حَوَاكَ فِي أَحْشَائِهِ
وَلَقَدْ تَعَوَّدَ أَنْ تَمُرَّ بِأَرْضِهِ   مَرَّ الْغَمَامِ بِظِلِّهِ وَبِمَائِهِ
نَمْ فِي جِوَارِ اللهِ مَا بِكَ غُرْبَةٌ   فِي ظِلِّ بَيْتٍ أَنْتَ مِنْ أَبْنَائِهِ
اَلْفَتْحُ وَهُوَ قَضِيَّةٌ قُدْسِيَّةٌ   يَا طَالَمَا نَاضَلْتُ دُونَ لِوَائِهِ
أَفَتَى بِدَفْنِكَ عِنْدَ سَيِّدَةِ الْقُرَى   مُفْتٍ[٣] أَرَادَ اللهُ فِي إِفْتَائِهِ
بَلَدٌ بَنُوهُ الأَكْرَمُونَ قُصُورُهُمْ   وَقُبُورُهُمْ وَقْفٌ عَلَى نُزَلَائِهِ

قَدْ عِشْتَ تَنْصُرُهُ وَتَمْسَحُ أَهْلَهُ
عَوْنًا فَكَيْفَ تَكُونُ مِنْ غُرَبَائِهِ

٣ مولانا شوكت علي الذي كان ينقل العزاء.   ٣ مفتي فلسطين الأكبر الحاج أمين الحسيني.

[Jerusalem, built on the sacred land, its sky protected by justice down to its foundation,
Conquest its banner, purity its sign and holiness its name,
Lowering its shoulders on the Islamic people, the arch of the holy land reaching Sinai,
Who can dispute the keys of its doors, the majesty of its throne and its land?
Mohamed praying on its site, receiving forgiveness all round,
Today people assemble round his grave, angels gathering in a sky festival.
O Jerusalem! prepare from your land a garden for the buried one (Mohamed Ali) and celebrate his meeting,

His is from God's swords (Glory) or from Indian swords when needed,
The Prophet opened his habitation freely, welcoming him in his removal,
Champion of the rights of the Orient and the Muslim cause,
Precious India did not let him forget his feelings for Eastern problems,
His garments weaved in India, can you see,
They buried the leader shrouded with his garments.
The Nile remembers his voice and the Turks could not forget his bravery,
Tell the leader Mohamed (Ali), into the Nile sorrow fell and filled it.
Going towards him in tears offering sorrow and condolence to your brother Maulana (Shaukat Ali).
You passed the Nile and he took you in his flank,
Had you waited he would have kept you in his heart.
It was used to your passing through it, as fast as the clouds pass over.
Sleep near God, you are not a stranger in the House because you are one of His children,
Victory is a holy cause, and you struggled under its wings,
The Mufti of Palestine had caused your burial in the Holy land,
You lived supporting the people of Palestine, how can you be a stranger?]

Mohamed Ali's own prophecy had come true. He did not return to a slave country. He was buried in the enclosure of the Dome of the Rock.[41] In a poem of his he had prophesied long before the Round Table Conference :

ہے رشک ایک خلق کو جوہر کی موت پر
یہ اس کی دین ہے جسے پروردگار دے !

[A whole world is envious of the death of Jauhar
But this is a gift of God; He gives to whosoever He pleases.]

This indeed was a gift. Iqbal certainly felt envious of the sublime end and wrote a sublime poem :

41. Buried in one of the small rooms reserved for scholars in olden times in the enclosure facing the Dome of the Rock. His grave bears the inscription: 'Here lies al-Sayyid Muhammad Ali al-Hindi.'

محمد علی جوہر

یک نفس جانِ نزار او تپید اندر فرنگ
تامژہ برہم زنیم از ماہ و پروین در گذشت

اے خوشا مشتِ غبار او کہ در جذبِ حرم
از کنار اندلس و از ساحل بربر گذشت

خاک قدس او را بہ آغوش تمنا در گرفت
سوئے گردون رفت زان راہے کہ پیغمبر گذشت

می نہ گنجد جز بہ آن خاکے کہ پاک از رنگ و بوست
بندۂ کو از تمیزِ اسود و احمر گذشت

جلوہ او تا ابد باقی بہ چشمِ آسیا است
گرچہ آن نورِ نگاہِ خاور از خاور گذشت

[For a while in the West his frail soul writhed in pain
And in the twinkling of an eye it slipped beyond the Moon and Mars.
Drawn by the love of the Harem the Blessed handful of dust
Passed by Andalusia and the Berber Coast;
The Holy Land welcomed him in warm and eager embrace
And he went the way of the Prophet to Heaven.
Only a land which was not tainted with a sense of colour and smell
Could have contained a servant of God, who had risen high above the criterion of colour.
The light of the East alas has gone out of the East !
But his vision will remain for ever in the mind of Asia.]

In death all controversies were silenced and all differences settled. Even Zafar Ali Khan who had been so merciless in his criticism of Mohamed Ali came out with this poetic tribute :

جس وقت ہو رہی تھی خلافت کی کانٹ چھانٹ
اور دشمنوں کی زد میں درِ دانیال تھا

خیبر سے چل کے تابہ سوادِ طرابلس
پھیلا ہوا صلیب پرستوں کا جال تھا

مغرب کا عزم تھا کہ عرب پارہ پارہ ہوں
ایرانیوں کی تاک میں دیو شمال تھا
برقِ ترنگ کوند رہی تھی حجاز پر
ناموسِ خواجۂ دوسرا پائمال تھا
دیتا تھا بوسہ قدس لوائے صلیب کو
لتھڑا ہوا لہو میں نشانِ ہلال تھا
ارضِ حرم تھی خونِ مسلماں سے لالہ رنگ
اسلام کا خود اپنے ہی گھر میں یہ حال تھا
اس جاں گسل جہاد میں کیونکر شریک ہو
ہندوستاں کا عقدہ یہی اک سوال تھا
آخر کیا یہ عقدہ محمد علی نے حل
حالانکہ ساری قوم میں قحط رجال تھا
محروم تھا اگرچہ وہ تیغ و تفنگ سے
لیکن زباں میں جوہرِ سحرِ حلال تھا
ملت کے احتجاج کی قوت تھی پشت پر
اور آگے آگے اُس کے نبی کا جلال تھا
اس لشکرِ گراں نے نصاریٰ کو دی شکست
ممکن وہ ہو گیا جو اک امرِ محال تھا
ملت کو جس نے فتح 'مبین' کی نوید دی
اسلام کا یہ قاصد فرخندہ فال تھا
ہند اور عرب کو جس نے ہم آغوش کر دیا
پیوند قدس ہو کے وہ اُس کا وصال تھا
میں اس کے حق میں اس کے سوا اور کیا کہوں
ہندوستاں میں آپ وہ اپنی مثال تھا

[When the Khilafat was being weighed and judged
And in the hands of the enemy lay the straits of David;
When from the Khyber to the straits of Tripoli
The worshippers of the cross had spread a web of intrigue;
When the West planned the breaking up of the Arabs
And the giant of the North had his eye on the Iranians;
When British lightning flashed across the Hejaz
And the honour of the traditional leader had been trampled upon;

When Jerusalem was kissing the emblem of the cross
And the crescent was steeped in (its own) blood;
When the Holy Land was stained with the Muslim's blood
And Islam had come to this in its very home;
When 'Why should we join the suicidal Holy War ?'
Was the question agitating every soul in India,
Then Mohamed Ali gave the answer to the riddle,
Though there were few to follow him amongst his people,
Though he was deprived of the sword and the gun,
But his tongue had the miraculous touch of the crescent.
The power of the support of his people was behind him
And the splendour and glory of the Prophet before.
This mighty force defeated the Nazarenes
And the inconceivable was made possible.
He who gave the news of this glorious victory to his people
Became a symbol of their happy future.
He who united India and Arabia
In turn realised himself in the soil of Jerusalem.
There is no more to say than this: in India
He was alone and unmatched in his excellence.]

Mohamed Ali left behind a wife who was widowed in a strange land. He also left behind two married daughters. He left no will, no property, no bank balance. All that he left was his message for with his death the mission did not end.

He lies buried in a neglected grave in the enclosure of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem—now in Zionist control. The spirit of Mohamed Ali is still crying freedom, freedom for Muslim lands from alien domination. Will the Muslims respond to his battle-cry ?

Chapter Fifteen

AN ASSESSMENT

MOHAMED ALI is dead. In December 1930, he completed fifty-two years of life. And what a life! Born in the wake of the Rising of 1857, he led in 1921 the first revolt of India against the British. For the first time India witnessed a mass movement which shook the country and nearly paralysed the British rule. For the first time India realised a new pride and dignity, and discovered a sense of unity and inner strength. For the first and last time, in a rare manifestation of amity and accord, Hindus and Muslims drank from the same cup and pledged together to drive out the common foe. Mohamed Ali became a powerful and picturesque symbol of the Khilafat movement which expressed the innermost yearnings of the Indian Muslim, a desire to conserve and consolidate his personality and unite with the Hindu in a bold and imaginative bid to rid the country of the foreign yoke. The hypnotic force of the movement is impossible to recapture. It simply exploded. There is no other way to describe it. Those who have grown up with the struggle, or in the shadow of the Khilafat movement, can alone recall the force, pride and enthusiasm generated in the listless millions who vaguely felt the stirrings of freedom but found little strength or resolve in them to shake off a century-old bondage which had stamped out their self-respect, their will to live as free men and women. If the vision which once inspired the Indian Muslim in a moment, which was remarkable for its innocence of motive and purity of emotion, has been tarnished and repudiated by the later growth of nationalism, it had, at least, once existed, and on a grand scale. It was a great romantic alibi for that generation.

Mohamed Ali epitomises his age. He seems to typify the central

experience of his own generation. He found an ethic for living and his idealism sustained him in the face of failure and frustration. His story is the story of sacrifice for ideals, the story of struggle and self-denial in the service of India and Islam. To the end of his days he retained the gift of simplicity of heart and absolute integrity of purpose. The qualities of simplicity, integrity, rectitude and courage in the face of extreme adversity invested him with the fire of faith. His faith in God was unshakable. He worked, struggled, fought to death trying to accomplish something. In fair or foul weather, against or with the wind, his submission to God was complete and unqualified. He never gave way in the face of challenge and crisis.

Born in a decadent and despotic state, he would have learnt the arts of flattery, subservience and sycophancy and might have become a minor courtier in Rampur. His penchant for poetry might have helped. He was an engaging conversationalist. His ready wit, his talent for repartee, his capacity for suffering fools, were all assets he could employ with profit to please a whimsical prince. The son of a courtier would have spent a lifetime currying favour with an erratic ruler; and given good luck, he might have died in perfect obscurity—a well-fed, a capable pillar of society, a normally functioning individual, sturdy and stupid, troubled by not a doubt. But he was rescued from oblivion. The young scion of a feudal family became an orphan at a very early age. The sad and sudden death of the father seemed to be a tragedy. But it marked the beginning of a break with tradition, an escape from Rampur and its crippling decadence.

His large, old ancestral home was one of the finest houses in all the town. Alas it is no more! On its site stands a high school today. He went to one across the road but he learnt most at the feet of his mother—an illiterate young widow. She was so different from the other ladies in the town. He loved his fiery resolute mother despite her occasional scoldings, for she understood him so well. As a young boy he went for a while to school in his native town. He was well dressed, well built, broad in the shoulders,

handsome with finely chiselled features, dark eyes with delicate shadows. His walk was idle and he looked dreamily and a little timorously on the world as he carried his satchel across his shoulders to school.

An orphan is easily spoilt in a joint family. A score of his cousins pampered the young boy and used him as a toy, pandering to his innocent wishes. The abundance of pity all around could have smothered him. The mother was in a minority of one and the collective will and way of life of the family would have produced at best a boy of gay abandon, watching quail fighting, flying kites, playing marbles, shouting applause at a poetic symposium and indulging in rhyming verse; for the climate of poetry in Rampur was irresistible. The poet laureate at the Court reflected with delicate beauty the decadence of the age and painted the many moods of love from his fertile imagination which creates the image of a saucy, tantalising whore rather than a modest girl one could fall in love with. Mohamed Ali would have followed the tradition. He would have weaved a web of words, empty and hollow, devoid of an inner depth of content.

It was fortunate that he did most of his schooling in Aligarh which was fast developing into a symbol of revolt against the tyranny of tradition. The image which was fostered in Rampur was being demolished in Aligarh. A different set of values was emerging. Nobody had a clear blueprint but a halting, blundering effort was being made to charter a new course. Another scion of a feudal family—Syed Ahmad Khan—had perceived that the need of the moment was not to produce courtiers but clerks—dignified clerks indeed who would not spend a lifetime learning the art of calligraphy in order beautifully to copy verses from the Quran without understanding them. He was aiming at a civil servant who would rub shoulders with his British colleagues and speak to them in their own idiom—civil servants, journalists, legislators, teachers, traders, but for God's sake no more courtiers, for the future of Indian Muslims now rested in removing the British suspicion about their loyalty to the Queen Empress. Queen Victoria was benevo-

lent. Her Muslim children in India, she assured, would no longer be given step-motherly treatment. Communication with the English masters could be established only if the children learnt the alien tongue, and to this end all the efforts in Aligarh were concentrated. Macaulay must have been plainly pleased at the success of his scheme of education which aimed at producing Indians who would be a carbon copy of British clerks.

Young Mohamed Ali did not find the school in Aligarh terribly interesting. Not because he was resisting Macaulay or Syed Ahmad. He had no idea what they were driving at. He was simply bored. Outside school he found his knowledge far more important and far more interesting than the sort they made him learn in school. During his lesson hours he was mainly occupied in drawing caricatures, in composing verse—some of it obscene to be sure. Outside school he was half bully, half comedian, blustering, entertaining to the last degree. The words of his song were trivial and sometimes silly, with leers and winks and the loose play of the tongue, he used words with an equivocal meaning and was vaguely offensive. He loved a fight and would pick up one without the slightest provocation. He could not resist a repartee—if a smart remark occurred to him he would lose power to contain himself. It came whooping, bawling, crashing out of him. He put on a serious countenance and pushed his listeners into laughter. These were the days of an affable, blithe, expansive mood. The target of his wit, unable to pay back in the same coin, would go running to his Big Brother, who would administer him rough and ready justice. The number of occasions he had his ears boxed by Shaukat Ali were legion. He would readily agree that his word-making was extravagant and out of place, but that did not enable him to leave it off.

Thus he spent his time in school—a perfect truant whose prodigious memory, inherited from the mother, was a veritable asset. He crammed his subject shortly before examinations and managed always to have good marks at the end of the year and never brought home a poor report which might trouble and anger his

mother for whom he cared so much.

Mohamed Ali's years in M.A.O. College marked the golden age of Aligarh. Beck, Morrison, Arnold and Shibli were on the staff. By the time he came to College two of his elder brothers had already graduated. Shaukat Ali made a mark in the field of sports. He captained the Cricket XI and was considered a leading sportsman of his day. Zulfaqar Ali, the eldest brother, was a bright student. He was an introvert and a sensitive intellectual. He joined the Ahmadiyyah sect and died in obscurity in Lahore after the creation of Pakistan. The fact that the two brothers had left the college when Mohamed Ali finished schooling in Aligarh helped a little. He was no longer trailing behind Shaukat Ali nor was he borrowing poems from Zulfaqar Ali. He was now on his own. He wrote for the college magazine and he spoke in the college union. But he did not hold office in either. He had never lacked confidence but now he was aggressive, impulsive and imperious. He was not easily dominated. The English professors had a patronising attitude and took obedience for granted. This meant conflict. The young boy who picked up quarrels with students at school had now a few fights with professors at college. While admiring English culture and education, he learnt also to admire the Englishman's love for liberty and had his first taste of a fight with the Empire-builders at Aligarh. He would not be treated but as an equal and he would not be pushed around. One does not know the precise measure of Shibli's influence, but all the evidence suggests that his impact was considerable. The revolutionary, the romantic, the revivalist, by whatever name one may call the later growth, the embryo showed unmistakable traits of ideas that Shibli fathered to instil a sense of self-respect in the drooping hearts of young Muslims.

There were no co-eds in college. The only girls one met at that time were in the family. Mohamed Ali, while not precisely precocious, yet, thanks to the company of his numerous grown-up cousins, some of whom were the age of his father, was early ripe. He listened to their manly gossip before he was out of school.

While at college he fell in love with the daughter of a cousin. For the girl to whom the fashionable young scholar from Aligarh was a cousin uncle and a hero, the new relationship came easily and naturally. Only the young man would have to wait until he could afford to set up home. And that he did while reading Modern History at Oxford and hoping that he would return home to the corridors of power. The much-coveted Indian Civil Service evaded his grasp but the young bride, the fiancé, to be precise, had not bartered her heart for a job in the Secretariat. She waited for years in anxious and loving anticipation.

In India Mohamed Ali had a first-class first in B.A. At Oxford he had a second. The only time he knew the sweet idleness and blithe *laissez aller* of youth was in England. He returned home to a happy marriage. As a young man he had grown turned-up moustaches. He was the first citizen of his state who had graduated from Oxford. His wife was indeed proud of him. She bore him four daughters. A son he never had. Two daughters survived him. His married life was utterly happy. His wife was his constant companion and comrade until his last moments in London. Later she carried on the fight until she died in 1947. In her own right she was a remarkable personality—the only woman in Indian political life who fully participated in the struggle without discarding purdah. She was a member of the Muslim League High Command and was greatly respected for her independence, integrity, courage and tenacity—traits of character she richly shared with her husband.

Though society at Rampur was provincial, parochial and limited, Mohamed Ali had no desire to leave his native state. But for inevitable intrigues at a princely court he might have ended his career there. He tried hard. But he failed to adjust himself to the arbitrary ways of Rampur. He moved to another state. At Baroda he struck a responsive chord. There he found his bearings. He contributed 'Thoughts on the Present Discontent' to the *Times of India.* His first appearance in print elicited much applause. The editor of the Bombay daily, Mr Loval Fraser,

encouraged him to write. It was with great love and affection that he later recalled, 'Mohamed Ali had a marvellous command over the English language. No Indian and perhaps very few Englishmen could write better than he did.'

He continued to write, but stray contributions to the press did not produce the fulfilment he was looking for. Freedom of expression did not go with the fetters he had put on as a Civil Servant. He decided to break them. It was a leap in the dark. He quit Baroda and moved to Calcutta to found the *Comrade*. He combined tenacious ambition with persistent industry. Single-handed he started a weekly from the capital of India where competition was fierce. The *Comrade* is an eloquent testimony to his talent as a writer. If he had done little else, he would be remembered as the Editor of *Comrade*, a journal which articulated the hopes, fears and aspirations of Indian Muslims with remarkable insight. He employed the written word, the avenging weapon of the weak, with a devastating effect. He articulated for the Muslims what they vaguely felt were their thoughts—sluggish, wayward, halting, with a melancholy tinge but in his words they took on a form, a shape, a goal. Sights and impressions which others brush aside with a light comment, a smile, a sigh, occupied the Editor of the *Comrade* till they took on meaning, and became experience, emotion, conviction. He wrote pregnant prose. In his thirties he was already sharing the glamour and obligations of fame. A civil servant had suddenly become the editor of the era. The comments of *Comrade* are lengthy by today's standards but in 1910's they were read with avidity by the Muslim intellectual whose applause and adulation was incredible. Mohamed Ali catered for his compatriots who could read English while Abul Kalam Azad wrote for those who read Urdu. Both were long-winded, repetitive and often obscure. Both hammered at the same theme; but Mohamed Ali commanded greater power and influence because he employed the medium of English. Azad was inordinately proud of his Arab origin and Mohamed Ali was not too unconscious of his Semitic blood. He referred to it in his last speech at

the Round Table Conference in London a few days before his death. His father proudly called himself a Khan but the son soon dropped the title, for was it not enough to bear the name of the Prophet of Islam together with the name of his most learned, pious and brave companion who was also his favourite nephew and son-in-law ? Love of Islam was his fatal gift. He cared little whether he was a Pathan or a Shaikh—these badges of clan and tribe he discarded early and he truly echoed, in his thought and deed, the Quranic injunction: 'The most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you' (xlix. 13). And the righteous for him was not the hermit who withdrew into inaccessible heights of the Himalayas to practise austerity and inflict pain on his body as if it were the gift of the devil.

For him righteousness consisted in daring to live and fighting the forces of evil and injustice. For a whole decade he waged war against repression. His pen was his sword. He championed the causes of the weak, the poor, the oppressed. He was tempted neither by recognition nor reward. There were failures and frustrations, to be sure, but suffering heightened life. Reverses and opposition he met with an endurance and a tenacity of purpose which won him the respect even of his adversaries. A great cause to which he had dedicated his life cast the shadow of greatness on him. But the adulation of the people made him more humble, more devout, more determined. With moderation and reason he argued with the foreign ruler to recognise the irresistible urges of freedom of a people who had been denied their liberty and their right to live. With his own people he pleaded with passionate sincerity to keep their emotions at a controlled pitch of intensity. The Hindu majority he advised to resist the temptation of indulging indiscriminately in the tyranny of numbers; the millions of Muslims, he pointed out, were not a minority but a nation and should, therefore, be treated with the dignity and respect that was due to them in terms of their size, their tradition, their history, their culture and their faith. Mutual confidence and co-operation was the burden of his song. Muslims saw the force

of his argument and responded to his call. For the first time they decided to make common cause with their Hindu compatriots to wipe out the shame of slavery and wrest freedom for their homeland.

He had the gift of calling things by their right names, to make them speak, to articulate the dormant desires of his people. This was a perilous gift. The British saw the danger and lost no time in alienating and removing him from the midst of the masses he seemed to sway with his persuasive programme. His only weapon was the word, written and spoken. For a decade he had employed it in the service of his people. The British decided to deprive him of his only weapon and incarcerated him. For nearly eight years his tongue was tied and his pen was broken.

Years of detention and imprisonment fortified his inflexible purpose. He was tried and tested, but he was not weary and faint-hearted. Patient in pain and adversity, he was not shaken in spirit. He was the epitome of fortitude under suffering. Accusations, allegations, trumped-up charges, malicious misrepresentations, vilification, character-assassination—these were no source of shame to the lover; rather they reaped him praise and honour. Seized and hidden away from his people, Mohamed Ali almost visibly rolls up his sleeves, girds up his loins, gathers his power about him and rises to the required occasion. Denied access to his people, he delves deep into himself and journeys about for years in the labyrinthine ways of his own soul—these years of exile and exploration are indeed exhilarating. They are years of illumination, the rediscovery of self, the emergence of fresh perspectives, a process of confrontation with himself which secures him a new lease on his ebbing strength and instils in him a new fire and a new resolve. In this wave-like motion of ebbing strength and fluent courage he finds a dynamic device to sustain and steel his determination.

Suffering and solitude give birth to the original in us, to beauty unfamiliar. It was in prison that he really became conscious of his gift of poetry. He felt a sudden urge to write. Away from the

adhesion of the public and the admiration of the *elite*, he created contact with his great hero—the Prophet of Islam. He mused, he dreamed, his time was filled with happy unrest. In his bowings, prostrations and prayers he shivered with an ecstasy he had not known before. He began his essay on the life of the Prophet, hoping to share it with those who were less fortunate and had not known him in the perspective in which Mohamed Ali saw him.

He was a man transformed. The metamorphosis was complete. The Editor of *Comrade* who was known for his impeccable taste for clothes and was admired for his keen sartorial sense now dressed with an almost disfiguring austerity. His baggy trousers of coarse cotton he now wore with a beard and a cap which carried the crescent and the star—the symbol of rising Islam. A delirious muezzin was now sending forth canticles to the sun. He collected his thoughts about him and began to write a biography of the Prophet. But the spell broke with his freedom from jail. He did not have time to look at the cluster of pages again. They remained neglected until a decade after his death when an unsuspecting student stumbled on the wealth of meaning in a dusty heap of papers. Exhausted by heightened ecstasies, worn out by the fevers and frosts of creation, emerging out of solitude and suffering, he stood between two worlds—the world of India and the world of Islam.

In the 1920's it seemed for a while that the synthesis was sound. It was no coincidence that both Gandhi and Mohamed Ali were deeply religious men. The mundane business of politics had been lifted to a spiritual plane. Mohamed Ali's own loyalty to Gandhi was deep. He found in him an affinity, an understanding, an inner sympathy which led him to believe that their co-operation in a common cause would prove formidable and fruitful. But this was not to be. He was disenchanted, disillusioned. The combination which master-minded the civil disobedience movement of 1921 had fallen apart by the end of the decade. The Muslims who had led the movement in 1920's significantly stood aloof when Gandhi launched his second campaign in 1930. Within a decade confidence

had been shattered, good-will frittered away.

Mohamed Ali wore his heart on his sleeve. Once he was convinced that a cause was just, he plunged headlong into it, holding back nothing. Cold calculation did not come into it. Gains and losses were not weighed. The battle of freedom is not waged in the spirit of striking a bargain. A cause claimed his whole being. In projecting his own values, however, he had not reckoned with the hardheaded business man, the *bania*, as he is called in India, who counts his pennies and places little premium on intangibles. But the Hindu in being penny-wise was being pound foolish. His pettyfogging and hideous haggling was incredibly absurd. Centuries of servitude had clouded his vision, his sense of perspective. Dreams of *revanche*, prospects of capturing power by sheer force of numbers, plans of hegemony, notions of reviving the ancient glory of India, made him intolerent and intransigent. Little did the Hindus realise that their hesitation in conceding only three more seats in the Central Legislature to Muslims would cost them the cherished unity of mother India. And yet they ignored their long-term interests, challenged the credentials of Muslims, cast doubt on their loyalty, maligned their faith and paved the way for the movement of separation which flourished in the 'thirties and culminated in the Lahore Resolution of 1940.

But here we are concerned with Mohamed Ali—his achievements and failures. What does the record reveal?

In journalism he set high standards which editors today will do well to emulate. Integrity not circulation was the aim that he set himself. His selflessness, his sincerity, his devotion to the causes he held dear, would not permit a deviation from the ethics which governed his life. His newspapers reflected his personality. The *Comrade* was a medium of communication with the Government; the *Hamdard*, a medium of communication with the people. In the one he articulated the thoughts of his people to the ruler; the other he used to communicate his own thoughts to the people. In both he eschewed sensationalism. He was at his best in the *Comrade*, for it must be conceded that his English prose is far

superior to his writings in Urdu. The *Comrade* gave eloquent expression to the ideas of the young Muslim intelligentsia, Indian by birth yet Western by education, modern in outlook yet staunchly Muslim in their vision. He became the embodiment and symbol of the intellectual Muslim class which sought to reconcile its goals with the alien environment, which worked for a synthesis of science and religion, and wished to combine in their person the best there was in both the cultures of the East and the West.

Courage and candour marked his writings. Revolutionary in aim, he was cautious in choosing his subject. He read far more than he wrote. His editorial staff would show symptoms of breaking down under stress but he manifested a rare power of working uniterrupted for long hours under pressure. An exacting taskmaster, he never spared himself and often wrote on a variety of subjects—politics, history, education, book reviews and even humour. His style was intense and explosive. He was deliberate in judgment but impulsive in expression. His editorials in *Comrade* became the food of Muslim intelligentsia on whom his impact was undoubtedly deep and lasting.

His ethical approach to life led him to reject advertisements which were unethical. Revenue could not override policy and influential lobbies could not lure him away. He found it easy to reject without a moment's hesitation the request for a jubilee number from the Maharaja of Alwar, a personal friend and a benefactor. He refused to pander to the public taste. He set store by honesty and intellectual tolerance. He manifested rare restraint and discipline when the entire Muslim press hailed in delirious headlines the decision of the Afghan Government to execute a couple of 'apostates' from Islam. He declined to join the chorus and stood alone but steadfast for the right of dissent. There was a time when Muslim India was clamouring for the blood of a stupid Hindu who had slandered the Prophet of Islam. He yielded to no one in his love of Islam and the Prophet, but he would not trade on the frenzied emotions of his people. He gave a lead and campaigned for an amendment of the law which would make it

impossible for irresponsible people to slander saints and prophets. The others merely contented themselves with shrieking headlines and pouring invective which was no less libellous than the slander they sought to expose. Adhesion to principles marked him out from his lesser colleagues in the profession. This endowed him with enormous prestige. He fought for the freedom of the press at a time when a value such as this moved few to heights of sacrifice. He championed the cause more tenaciously than most and suffered cheerfully in the process.

In the second decade of the twentieth century when Mohamed Ali launched *Comrade*, he was largely responsible for moulding the mood of the Muslim intelligentsia; his base widened when he emerged as the unquestioned leader of the Khilafat movement. Gandhi alone wielded greater influence. But Mohamed Ali was to a large extent responsible for swaying the Muslims into joining the National Congress. This was an immense development and if Muslims withdrew within a decade, the blame must squarely rest on the Congress whose view of Muslim co-operation was singularly myopic. Mohamed Ali with his magnetic personality provided a powerful link between the Muslims and the Congress and with his withdrawal in 1928 the link snapped. It was not to be restored again.

He was a strange mixture of courage and caution, at once revolutionary and conservative. In 1928 he championed complete independence for India when younger men like Jawaharlal Nehru felt helpless and throttled. In 1930 when Nehru at last freed himself from the shackles and raised his voice in support of complete independence, Mohamed Ali advocated Dominion Status. He genuinely valued the British connection. Little did the British ruler realise the pride he felt in Oxford, the little city where he had learnt to speak and write impeccable English. A rare synthesis of all that was valuable in the culture of the East and the West, he entertained no grudge, no hatred against the British. While fighting their tyranny he admired their democratic spirit. An aristocrat by birth and training, he had no patience for the vulgar.

He could ignore with contempt the opinion of that intangible commodity called the common man. He considered it his business to lead and not follow the public. And yet he craved for their approval and felt deeply hurt when it was denied him.

Though he established a communion with his higher self in the deep recesses of his solitude, he could not usually bear to be alone. He loved company. He was always surrounded. He kept an open house. Even in the days of distress, he never ate alone. He was a gourmet. He liked good food and he liked to entertain. Sometimes he forced his hospitality on casual visitors. He was generous to a fault. He kept contributing to charities even when his own means were inadequate. His compulsion for constant company is perhaps explained by his inner loneliness. He once wanted to commit suicide; the provocation was the temporary defeat of the Turks. Public life has its compensations as well as frustrations. Mohamed Ali had a rich bag of the latter. A sensitive soul with a sense of profound personal commitment, he was not able to develop the aloofness and detachment so necessary for survival in a situation of continuing crises. Perhaps he sought his defence in company. A brilliant conversationalist, he freely spent of his energy which might well have been conserved for better pursuits. Debate and discussion came naturally to him, the anecdotes and quotations from Persian and Urdu poetry came gushing forth, his repertoire of jokes was inexhaustible, his gestures were animated and his argument lengthy and repetitive. It was difficult to disengage him. He talked to different people on different subjects at the same time and also went on scribbling his editorial on bits of paper. This went on daily until late into night when he would retire utterly exhausted.

He easily made friends. He fraternised with lords and ladies with the same facility as he mixed with the plebian. The party worker, the butcher, the tailor, the petty shopkeeper was as much at home with him as the student, the top civil servant, the politician, the poet, the religious divine. To each he spoke in his own idiom. His house was a haunt of a hundred hues. The Maharaja of Alwar, the Nawab of Bhopal and the Maharaja of Mahmud-

abad he counted among his friends and admirers; with Hasrat Mohani, the poet-politician, and Iqbal, the poet-philosopher, he had an equation which survived all differences of opinion; for Jawaharlal Nehru he had an affection which was deep and lasting. He was generous and large-hearted. His friends he never tested, his enemies he forgave with inhuman haste. He was at his most human with children whom he dearly loved.

No leader in India was less methodical and more careless of his personal comfort. His personal life was thoroughly disorganised. He found it impossible to say no to anyone. He simply could not bear the idea of people waiting to see him. His irregular hours heavily told on his health. Nothing would, however, persuade him to adopt a strict regime.

The only person who could lay down the law for him was his brother Shaukat Ali. To him he owed much. In most things in life he paved the way for him. An officer in the Opium Department in the United Provinces he spent all his monthly salary on his education in England. To send him there he raised a loan which took him years to repay. He was deeply disappointed when Mohamed Ali failed to get into I.C.S., but he gave him generously of his help and encouragement when the younger brother entered politics. In this field he followed him. He resigned from Government service and showed a talent for party organisation. He shared his brother's ideas, shared his exile and supported him through thick and thin. The brothers became inseparable. Mohamed Ali Shaukat Ali became a household word in India. Shaukat Ali was by his bedside when Mohamed Ali breathed his last. The loving hands of Shaukat Ali gave him the last bath; he accompanied the dead body to Jerusalem and there laid him to rest, and returned to India to carry on the struggle. Senior in years he had no hesitation in acting as a lieutenant of his younger brother.

With his brother's death he proved a pillar of strength to another Mohamed Ali. Jinnah was fighting a lonely battle. An apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity he was loath to give up the goal even though his namesake had lost all hope of *rapprochement*. Shaukat Ali put the

Muslim League on a sure footing with his victory in the bye-elections in U.P. in 1935. It was not without good cause that Muhammad Ali Jinnah waited for hours at the footsteps of Jami Masjid in Delhi to join his funeral procession.

Mohamed Ali inspired great faith and adoration among his people. He had built up a reputation as a powerful writer and a fearless advocate of causes, but he was not known as an orator until he plunged into the turmoil of agitational politics at the end of the First World War. As a leader of Khilafat movement he rose to heights of eloquence. His speech was explosive. His power and popularity flew essentially from the sincerity of his purpose and the lofty aims he set his people. The crowds had an electrifying effect on him. The contact was mutual. He caused an upheaval in Muslim India and he was caught himself in the maelstorm of an emotional upheaval. He was at perfect ease with the masses. He was natural, honest, spontaneous. They loved the many moods of his personality. Now he appeared fond, now angry and excited, now modest and humble, now proud, now he begged, beseeched with sweet reasonableness, now he thundered and dictated with arrogant authority. The masses loved him as he indeed was in love with them. They gave him allegiance, they followed him to jails and filled them to overflowing, they accepted exile, suffering and sacrifice at the bidding of their leader who held back nothing from them. He moved them to tears, and transported them to a state of frenzied ecstasy. Once he said he would sacrifice his life, the life of his brother and even the life of his beloved mother for the sake of Khilafat. Men and women wept like children and vowed that they would be the first to offer the supreme sacrifice. A young intellectual noted the effect and thought that the particular sentence was the cause of the spectacular show of emotion and loyalty. He had hoped to create a similar effect when he employed the same vocabulary but the audience simply laughed and turned away. He had ignored the reality that the style was man and that these simple words flowing from the mouth of a man who had sacrificed his all for the cause created an effect entirely different from that of a

mere academic who sought to embellish his declamation with the flourish of a phrase.

No account of Mohamed Ali's life is complete without a tribute to his mother. She was seventy-three, when her sons were imprisoned. She had lived in seclusion all her life and had not known the rough and tumble of politics. Yet in her old age she took a plunge into public life. She was the first Muslim woman to take part in Indian politics. She toured the country, addressed public meetings, launched appeals, collected funds and kept alive the fervour of the Khilafat movement. Her courage, her poise and dignity, her quiet determination were a source of inspiration to millions of men in the critical days of the movement. To no one person in life did Mohamed Ali owe so much as to his resolute mother who gave him strength, courage and cause for living.

In the early 'twenties Mohamed Ali had reached the pinnacle of power. But he soon slipped from the dizzy heights. The fall was fairly precipitous.

With the failure of the Khilafat movement the masses felt betrayed, confused, frustrated and bewildered. Their hopes had been dashed and destroyed. They were in a state of disarray. Hindu-Muslim unity seemed a mirage, the Khilafat an illusion. Turkey was proclaimed a secular republic. India was emerging as a Hindu State in which Muslims would be trampled underfoot. They shuddered to think of the consequences. Their fate as a minority was uncertain. The Hindus declined to concede them nominal majority even in provinces in which they outnumbered them. Both India and Islam seemed to show little interest in the fate of the Indian Muslim. He was beset with problems and no longer had the energy, the hope, the optimism that only a short while ago had inspired him to heights of effort and idealism. Mohamed Ali was now a lonely traveller confronted with a myriad of problems to which answers seemed to elude his grasp. The call of crisis stirred strange depths within him, but how would he fill the void that had been caused by the withdrawal of the

crowds, the warmth of the public, adhesion of the masses? He made a desperate bid to win their confidence, their love, their affection and gained it only when he no longer needed these props to sustain him. With his heroic death, his martyred end in London, returned the halo that had ceased for some time, to cast its shadow on him. He had now been well and truly rehabilitated in the love, affection and esteem of his people. He had found a permanent niche in their memory.

How does one assess such a life—by the ends it sought to pursue or the results it produced? In the short span of fifty-two years he was in public life for twenty, and of these nearly eight were spent in enforced retreat. In twelve years that were spared him, he certainly dared to live. The record of those years is impressive by any standard. Patriot, politician, poet, author, educationist, Mohamed Ali has a myriad facets to his powerful and picturesque personality.

We have tried briefly in this book to delineate his life; there are gaps which will be filled by others, there is room for different views about his contribution to the causes he espoused, but on one point there can be no disagreement. Mohamed Ali was above all an humble and honest Muslim who passionately believed in Islam. He was a simple child of God who lived and died in the service of Islam—not cogitating in the ivory tower of a scholar interested in a speculative discussion of the dogma, not a wise man watching and weighing a situation and doing little about it. The wise ones pause and ponder in the midst of the clamour and contradictions of life and seldom respond to its call. The mad ones rush to the gallows. Of such kind was Mohamed Ali—a man of faith, a man of action, a man of God, a man possessed.

Muslim India has yet to produce his peer. He had his successes and his failures. In the 'twenties his was the most formidable name among Indian Muslims; he persuaded C.R. Das to give up his fabulous legal practice in Calcutta to join the non-co-operation movement; he prevailed upon Muhammad Ali Jinnah to join the

Muslim League; he founded the Jamia Millia Islamia, the only National Muslim University which flourishes today in India; he led the first mass movement of Muslims after the Rising of 1857. He followed Gandhi when he thought it was in the interest of Muslims to do so; he resisted and opposed him when he sincerely believed that he was betraying the cause of Indian Muslims. For their sake he fought the British Government, the Hindu militant and the Muslim loyalist. For their sake he laid down his life. In death as in life he served Islam with all his heart. His heart indeed is the key to his failures. Others who were less emotional and more calculating seemed to get the better of him. The failure of the Khilafat movement, the failure to set up a republican government in Hejaz and the failure to find in his lifetime a solution for the Hindu-Muslim problem are all laid at his door. The last is the least offensive in that it led to the creation of a sovereign and independent state.

The basic point that critics seem to forget in a hurry to pass judgment on moments of history is the limitation of a single mortal to mould it to his heart's desire. His heart bled at the sight of the only free and independent Muslim state succumbing to alien values in her struggle for survival. He had no sympathy for the secular aspirations of Turkey. He clung to his own concept of Khilafat. That his championship of the Turkish cause had its effect and made the peace terms a little less cruel is a matter of historical record. But his perception of the hopes and aspirations of young Turks lacked in the requisite depth and gave rise to an element of unrealism which caused avoidable frustration. It was an enormous error of judgment. But the fact that he expressed an idea, gave birth to a thought, worked all his life to give it a shape, inspired others to a brave endeavour, and gave up his life in the process, and left behind a legacy which is still potent and pertinent, is not to be lightly dismissed. Khilafat was not the invention or the preserve of Mohamed Ali—the idea has existed since the death of the Prophet and has found expression in many forms and shapes in the Muslim world. That the particular shape

envisaged by him did not prove to be practicable does not detract from the importance of a fundamental need. The unity of Muslims is a recognised and desirable goal, the means may differ but the end is unexceptionable. And this is no less true of his republican ambitions. The struggle continues as it should.

What is called real politik seemed so unreal to him. Play of power politics, devious devices, interminable intrigue, were alien to his nature and created in him a sense of revolt and repulsion. The ruthless pursuit of power in which man is mere gun fodder and truth the first casualty, he abhorred with all his heart. The cruel subtleties in which scruples play no part were wholly beyond his ken.

But where, after all in history, does one find a conqueror throwing away the spoils of war ? Whoever emulated the example of Muhammad at the conquest of Mecca? Agitation could perhaps soften a little the severities of the Treaty of Sevres but the sword of Kemal alone could contain the rapacious greed of the conquering nations. And having driven out the invader, how could he be expected to revert to the *status quo ante bellum*? Even if it were highly desirable there is no going back in history. We can only move forward. And yet even after the abolition of the Khilafat, Mohamed Ali clung to his dream. With a strange quixotic tenacity he continued charging at the windmill, hugging an illusion which had clearly become irrelevant and impossible. He was not able to build the golden bridges for retreat. Such skills did not fall in his sphere.

He readily believed that Ibn Saud would gladly surrender his power to a conference of Muslims after driving out Sharif Husain from Hejaz. The verbiage of words overwhelmed his sense of saner judgment. On what foundation indeed had he built up the fond hope that a prize won in a battlefield would be handed over on a platter to a conference of conflicting interests? And in the conference he was easily outwitted and outmanoeuvred. The cynical realities of power politics he ignored at his own peril. And yet had he been given another life, he would have repeated

the mistakes all over again. He would not have cared to emulate the example of pragmatic politicians. He was an idealist, a dreamer, a visionary. He would have feign continued the crusade against tyranny, injustice and inequity even though he did not have a single follower. Despite every reverse that he suffered in the late 'twenties, for all his faults and failures, Muslim India would have been the poorer without the dynamic inspiration of his leadership.

H.G. Wells was only partially right when he said: 'Mohamed Ali had the heart of Napolean, the pen of Macaulay and the tongue of Burke.' A born iconoclast Mohamed Ali set out to serve Islam in his own inimitable way. Time and eternity were of no consequence to him. The cause he served was timeless, endless. All that mattered was the will to serve, not the desire to succeed and leave monuments to posterity. The paradoxes, the contradictions are dissolved by the ringing clarity of conviction, the sincerity of purpose and the all-consuming desire of a votary who dedicates his life to a cause, a mission, an ideal. As a true follower of the Holy Prophet, he derived his inspiration from the words of the Quran:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ○

لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۚ وَبِذَٰلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ○

['Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for God, the Cherisher of the Worlds. No partner hath He: this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who bow to His Will' (vi. 162-63).]

GLOSSARY

Note.—This Glossary is confined to terms used throughout the book except those which have been translated into English in parentheses in the text.

Allah-o-Akbar, God is great

Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Kaabah, Servants of the Kaaba Society

charkhah, spinning wheel

dar al-harb, land of war, i.e. countries not under Muslim control

dar al-Islam, land of peace, i.e. countries under Muslim rule

darbar, a royal court

farman, order, royal edict

fatwa, an edict, authentic pronouncement on a religious issue

fellaheen, landless peasants of Egypt

firnie, rice pudding

hadis, a report of a statement or utterance made by the Prophet

haram, forbidden (by the law of Islam)

havaldar, a sergeant

hijrat, migration, often referred to the migration of the Prophet from Mecca

ijtihad, use of individual judgment

jihad, holy war

kafir, unbeliever

kalimah, the Muslim declaration of faith : 'There is no god but God'

khaddar, home-spun cotton cloth

khadi, loom

khalifah, Caliph

khayr al-umam, the best of nations

khilafat, Caliphate

langoti, loin-cloth

madrassah, school

millat, religious community, especially the community of Islam
muhajir, emigrant
mushairah, poetical symposium
muttafiqah fatwa, unanimous religious injunction
nautch, dance
pilau, pilaff, a popular Mughal dish of rice
sangathan, unity, a sectarian movement launched by the Hindus in India
satyagraha, strike, non-violent, non-co-operation
shariat, holy law of Islam
shuddhi, purification, conversion to Hinduism
sirat-i-mustaqim, the straight path
swadeshi, native
swaraj, independence
tabligh, proselytism, preaching of religion
tafsir, exegesis (of the Quran)
tanzim, discipline
ulema, men of religious learning in Islam
ummah, community
ummah wahidah, a single community
zardah, sweet, coloured rice, a favourite Indian Muslim dish
zenana, female quarter of an orthodox Muslim house

CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

8 JAN 1877	Lord Lytton lays the foundation stone of Aligarh College
10 DEC 1878	Birth of Mohamed Ali at Rampur
1879	Publication of Altaf Husain Hali's poem 'The Flow and Ebb of Islam'
20 OCT 1880	Death of Abdul Ali Khan, Mohamed Ali's father
1883	Shibli Numani joins Aligarh College as Assistant Professor of Arabic
1885	Founding of the Indian National Congress
1887	Syed Ahmad Khan's speech at Lucknow advising Muslims to refrain from joining the Indian National Congress
1890	Mohamed Ali joins school at Aligarh
1893	Syed Ahmad Khan expresses need of a separate political organisation for Indian Muslims
1897	Death of Jamal-ud-Din Afghani
	Death of Syed Ahmad Khan
SEP 1898	Mohamed Ali's graduation from the University of Aligarh
	Arrival of Mohamed Ali in London to join the University of Oxford
1902	Failure of Mohamed Ali in the Indian Civil Service examination and return to Rampur to get married
1903	Mohamed Ali joins Baroda Civil Service
1904	Mohamed Ali's address at Ahmedabad on the proposed Mohammedan University
1905	Partition of Bengal
1906	The Aga Khan leads a Muslim Deputation to the Viceroy, Lord Minto
	The First Session of All-India Muslim League at Dacca
	Publication of Mohamed Ali's pamphlet entitled the 'Green Book' describing the First Session

	of the Muslim League
1907	Publication of a series of articles entitled 'Thoughts on the Present Discontent' in the *Times of India*, Bombay
FEB 1907	Strike at the Aligarh College
1908	Emergence of the Society of Union and Progress as a successful revolutionary group in Turkey
	Death of Prince Fateh Singh of Baroda
1910	Minto-Morley Reforms
	Decision to quit Baroda Civil Service
14 JAN 1911	Launching of the *Comrade* in Calcutta
1911	Shaukat Ali quits the Civil Service and assists the Aga Khan in collecting 3 million rupees for the University of Aligarh
	The Coronation Darbar in Delhi
	The incident involving the Maharaja of Baroda
	Annulment of the Partition of Bengal
1912	Disastrous war in the Balkans and Mohamed Ali's attempt to commit suicide
	Mohamed Ali launches a loan for Turkey and organises relief for the wounded
	Departure of Indian Medical Mission for Turkey
14 SEP 1912	The *Comrade* closes down in Calcutta
12 OCT 1912	The *Comrade* is published from Delhi
13 JUN 1913	The first issue of the *Hamdard*, an Urdu daily, comes out from Delhi
JULY 1913	Return of the Indian Medical Mission from Turkey
SEP 1913	Confiscation of a pamphlet entitled *Come to Macedonia and Help Us*
	Mohamed Ali takes the case to the High Court of Calcutta
	The Chief Justice passes strictures against the Government
	Mohamed Ali leaves in cognito for London to lead Muslim Deputation in connection with the Cawnpore Mosque incident

OCT-NOV 1913	Mohamed Ali prevails upon M.A. Jinnah to join the Muslim League
DEC 1913	Delegation leaves England
30-31 DEC 1913	Mohamed Ali congratulated in the Seventh Muslim League Session for his performance in England
MAR 1914	A Deputation of Muslims waits on Lord Hardinge
26 SEP 1914	Publication of the leading article entitled 'Choice of the Turks' in the *Comrade*
	Forfeiture of the security of the *Comrade* press
OCT 1914	Outbreak of the First World War
1915	Mohamed Ali's Internment in Rampur
MAY 1915	Mohamed Ali's Internment in Mehrauli and Chhindwara
SEP 1915	Silk Letter Case
1916	The Lucknow Pact
1917	Muslim League passes a resolution demanding the release of Ali Brothers
	Government appoints a Committee to examine the question of the Ali Brothers' release
SEP 1917	Government demands an apology from Mohamed Ali
NOV 1917	Secretary of State for India, Mr Montagu's visit to India
DEC 1917	Mohamed Ali elected President of All-India Muslim League in absentia
DEC 1918	Mohamed Ali files a written statement to the Committee
APR 1919	The Congress demands repeal of the Rowlatt Act
30 APR 1919	Massacre of Jallianwala Bagh
8 JUN 1919	Mohamed Ali removed from Chhindwara to Betul jail
DEC 1919	Mohamed Ali writes an indignant letter to the Viceroy from Betul jail
1 FEB 1920	Mohamed Ali leads Khilafat Delegation to Europe
16 MAY 1920	Publication of the Peace Terms with Turkey
26 MAY 1920	Publication of the Hunter Committee Report

23 JUN 1920	The All-India Khilafat Conference adopts plan of action
JUL 1920	The Hijrat movement
13 OCT 1920	Mohamed Ali's return to India
26 OCT 1920	Trouble in Aligarh and the founding of the National Muslim University
DEC 1920	The Indian National Congress adopts Swaraj as the national objective
APR 1921	The Government of the United Provinces proposes prosecution of Mohamed Ali for his violent speeches
MAY 1921	The second Khilafat Delegation led by Dr Ansari returns from England
31 MAY 1921	The Government of India Communique about the alleged apology and undertaking given by Mohamed Ali
JUN 1921	Mohamed Ali presides over All-India Khilafat Conferences at Karachi
14 SEP 1921	Mohamed Ali arrested
	Trial at Karachi and the speech to the jury
	Sentenced to two years of rigorous imprisonment
OCT 1921	Moplah Rebellion breaks out
1922	Gandhi suspends Civil Disobedience Movement
JUL 1922	Disclosure about embezzlement in the Khilafat funds
NOV 1922	The Khalifah deposed in Turkey
SEP 1923	Release of Mohamed Ali and election as President of the Indian National Congress
OCT 1923	Mustafa Kemal elected President of the Republic of Turkey
3 MAR 1924	Caliphate abolished in Turkey
11 MAR 1924	Death of Mohamed Ali's favourite daughter, Aminah
SEP 1924	Release of M.K. Gandhi
	Gandhi stays with Mohamed Ali in Delhi
	Gandhi's 21-day fast in Mohamed Ali's house

23 OCT 1924	Reported bombardment of Medina by the troops of Ibn Saud
31 OCT 1924	Revival of *Comrade* from Delhi
18 NOV 1924	Revival of *Hamdard* from Delhi
NOV 1924	Death of Mohamed Ali's mother
OCT 1925	Khilafat Committee Delegation to Hejaz
1926	The success of the Hindu Mahasabha in elections
13 JAN 1926	Mohamed Ali breaks with his spiritual preceptor, Maulana Abdul Bari
22 JAN 1926	Closure of the *Comrade*
MAR 1927	Conference of Muslim leaders in Delhi
	Delhi Proposals
	Publication of a pamphlet entitled *Rangila Rasul*
20 MAY 1927	Closure of *Hamdard*
NOV 1927	Appointment of the Simon Commission
	Split in the Muslim League
MAY 1928	Mohamed Ali leaves for England for medical treatment
	The Nehru Report rejected by Muslims
DEC 1928	Mohamed Ali's return to India from England
	Mohamed Ali quits Indian National Congress
MAR 1929	Mohamed Ali's brief visit to Burma
JUL 1929	Death of a daughter
31 OCT 1929	Lord Irwin declares Dominion Status as the goal of Indian reforms
NOV 1929	Memorandum to the Viceroy against the Sharda Act
DEC 1929	All-India Congress declares complete independence as its creed
MAY 1930	Publication of Simon Report
JUN 1930	Serious illness of Mohamed Ali; confinement to hospital in Simla
	Acceptance of the Viceroy's invitation to attend the Round Table Conference in London

19 NOV 1930	Mohamed Ali's speech at the Round Table Conference, London
29 DEC 1930	Iqbal's address to the Muslim League at Allahabad
4 JAN 1931	Mohamed Ali breathes his last in London
24 JAN 1931	Mohamed Ali's burial in Jerusalem

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